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Viksit Gram Panchayats paving the way for Viksit Bharat

CBC 35101/13/0086/2526

Kashmir Gears Up For R-Day Celebrations

Full Dress Rehearsals Held Across Valley



KO Photo by Abid Bhat

Observer News Service

Srinagar: As preparations enter the final phase, Kashmir is gearing up for Republic Day celebrations under a comprehensive and tightly coordinated security framework, with authorities encouraging public participation across the Valley.

Inspector General of Police, Kashmir, V K Birdi said elaborate multi-tier security arrangements have been put in place to ensure peaceful and smooth Republic Day celebrations. He said the security deployment involves the Jammu and Kashmir Police along with central paramilitary forces, creating a | [More on P10](#)

Drones, CCTVs Deployed; Checkpoints Tightened

Head of Republic Day, security has been further tightened across Jammu and Kashmir, with forces carrying out extensive area domination and sanitisation operations, officials said. A senior security official said that security has been beefed up across all 20 districts of the Union Territory, with particular focus on border areas. He said sensitive locations in Kashmir have witnessed enhanced security measures, including road blockades, vehicle checks, security cordons, and search operations. The official said there is extensive | [More on P10](#)

BJP Rules Out Separate Jammu, Says J&K Is One Unit

Press Trust Of India

Jammu: BJP on Saturday reaffirmed its commitment to a united Jammu and Kashmir, firmly rejecting demands raised by some of its party MLAs seeking separate statehood for Jammu after its separation from Kashmir.

The BJP leadership clarified its stand on the sidelines of a day-long workshop organised by the party for its legislators ahead of the Budget session of the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly which is scheduled to start on February 2.

"BJP believes in a fully united Jammu and Kashmir, including the parts under the illegally occupied by Pakistan. BJP remains firmly committed to equitable and holistic | [More on P10](#)

J&K Budget Session Set For Heated Exchanges

Opposition To Likely Challenge NC-led Govt Over Poll Promise

Agencies

Srinagar: The upcoming budget session of Jammu & Kashmir is expected to be stormy, with opposition parties, especially the Bharatiya Janata Party, set to challenge the National Conference-led government on a range of issues, from its pre-election commitments regarding freebies to what they describe as governance failures.

In a clear indication that the BJP will leave no stone unturned in questioning the government's performance over the past 16 months, the party held a training workshop for its legislators on Saturday at



winter capital Jammu to prepare them for the upcoming session.

The party's National General Secretary Tarun Chugh, former Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh Jai Ram Thakur, and Delhi Assembly Speaker Vijender Gupta were also present in the training session, which | [More on P10](#)

CM Holds Pre-Budget Consultations With MLAs

Observer News Service

As part of the ongoing pre-budget consultations for the Budget Session 2026-27, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Saturday continued discussions with Members of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly from South and North Kashmir districts at the Civil Secretariat here. The meeting | [More on P10](#)

'This Snowfall Has Pulled Kashmir Back From The Brink'

Season's First Major Snowfall Ends Prolonged Dry Spell, Replenishes Moisture And Revives Crop Prospects Across Valley

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The season's first major snowfall has brought much-needed relief to Kashmir's farming and horticulture sectors, ending a prolonged dry spell that had raised serious concerns over crop health, orchard sustainability and water availability across the Valley.

According to independent

weatherman, Faizan Arif, the strong Western Disturbance ended up dumping close to a month's worth of rainfall in just two days.

After nearly five months of scant rainfall and snowfall, Jammu and Kashmir witnessed widespread snow and rain on Friday. The precipitation has been welcomed as a timely intervention by farmers, fruit growers and experts,

who say the moisture has arrived at a critical stage for the region's largely rain-fed agriculture.

Agriculture and horticulture experts said that the extended dry spell had led to declining soil moisture, drying up of water sources and increased stress on farmlands and orchards. They warned that continued dryness could have severely affected flowering,

fruit setting and overall crop productivity in the coming season.

"This snowfall has pulled Kashmir's farms back from the brink," said Aamir Yousuf Bhat, a fruit trader and horticulture expert. He said prolonged moisture deficiency directly impacts flowering and fruit formation, particularly in orchards. "Had it not snowed now, it would | [More on P10](#)



Ponies line up against the backdrop of snow-covered meadows and mountains at Sonamarg. KO Photo by Abid Bhat

More Rain, Snow Likely From Jan 26: MeT

Observer News Service

Srinagar: A fresh spell of rain and snowfall is likely to affect most parts of Jammu and Kashmir from January 26 as a new western disturbance approaches the region, the India Meteorological Department said on Saturday, advising caution in higher reaches and suspension of farm-related activities.

According to the Meteorological Department, the weather is expected to remain unsettled from the night of January 26, with rain and snow likely at most places across the Valley and adjoining hilly areas. A few locations may witness moderate to heavy precipitation accompanied by thunder and gusty winds, particularly during the night of January 26 and the evening of January 27.

The advisory comes after Kashmir experienced widespread rainfall and snowfall over the past 24 hours, with heavy accumulation reported in higher reaches. Officials said most parts of the Valley received moderate to heavy snowfall, while plains saw light to moderate snow, leading to | [More on P10](#)

Flights Resume; NH Still Shut

Flight operations at Srinagar Airport resumed on Saturday after remaining suspended for a day due to heavy snowfall, officials said, even as massive road clearance operations continued across Jammu and Kashmir to restore connectivity on key highways.

Officials said the Airports Authority of India, in close coordination with the Border Roads Organisation, successfully cleared | [More on P10](#)

UP Binds India Across All Directions: LG

Hails State's Cultural & Spiritual Legacy At Foundation Day Event

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday highlighted the deep cultural, spiritual, and historical legacy of Uttar Pradesh while addressing Uttar Pradesh Foundation Day celebrations at the Jammu Kashmir Lok Bhavan.

Extending greetings and best wishes to the people of Uttar Pradesh, the Lieutenant Governor paid homage to the state's freedom fighters, revolutionaries, and eminent personalities, recalling their pivotal role in shaping modern



India. He said literary figures have identified ancient Uttar Pradesh as India's heartland and the cradle of major scriptures, including the Vedas, Upanishads, Ramayana, Mahabharata, | [More on P10](#)

Nasir Wani Gets Cabinet Rank



Observer News Service

Srinagar: Nasir Aslam Wani, Advisor to the Chief Minister, has been given the rank and status of a cabinet minister.

Nasir Aslam Wani will be entitled to a consolidated amount of Rs 80,000 per month, rent-free accommodation, and transport facilities to be provided by the Motor Garages Department.

Nasir Aslam Wani, who has served as a minister in the NC-Congress government, is a trusted aide of CM Omar Abdullah. | [More on P10](#)



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DIPK-10360/25 Dated: 24/01/2026



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Scholarships This Week

Kashmir Observer in association with Buddy4Study.com presents scholarships available for the meritorious students of Jammu and Kashmir

Scholarship Name 1: Azim Premji Scholarship 2025

Description: The Azim Premji Scholarship 2025 is an opportunity being offered by the Azim Premji Foundation as a part of their commitment towards improving the quality and equity of education in India. The initiative seeks to support female students from disadvantaged backgrounds to pursue college education through financial aid.

Eligibility: In order to become eligible, an applicant must: have passed Class 10 and 12 as a regular student, from a government school/college in one of the specified and listed Indian states have been admitted in the first year for the academic session 2025-26 onwards be admitted to a recognised undergraduate degree or diploma course in a government/private university in India

Prizes & Rewards: Selected candidates will receive an annual scholarship of 30,000.

- Last Date to Apply: 31-01-2026
- Application mode: Online applications only
- Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/AZPS1
- QR Code: https://dle9eg0t05513.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/20251768888518.png

Scholarship Name 2: MynVidya: Myntra Cares Scholarship Program

Description: The MynVidya: Myntra Cares Scholarship Program extends financial support to students belonging to the families of garment workers and artisans and helps them pursue their higher education in recognised State and Central Universities, including artisan-related NSDC-certified upskilling training programs,

empowering students to overcome financial barriers in pursuit of their academic and career goals.

Eligibility: Applicants from families employed as a full-time garment workers and artisans who must have completed Class 12 in any stream with a minimum of 60% marks. Must be enrolled in a full-time graduation course in any year (B.A., B.Sc., B.Com., BBA, BCA, etc.) in a recognised State/Central University. Annual family income of the applicants must be less than INR 5,00,000.

Applicants for the NSDC Artisan Upskilling program must be 14 to 30 years old, must have completed Class 10 (no minimum percentage), and be enrolled in a recognised NSDC-certified training course in approved institutes or under the NHDP, SAMARTH, or IITHT programs, etc.

Prizes & Rewards: Selected students will receive a scholarship of INR 20,000 per year for 3 years.

(Note: Renewable for up to 3 years for students enrolled in full-time graduation courses, subject to academic performance and fulfilment of renewal criteria.)

- Last Date to Apply: 15-02-2026
- Application mode: Online applications only
- Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/MVMCSP2
- QR Code: https://dle9eg0t05513.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/1768888581.png

Scholarship Name 3: BGM Foundation Pashu-Seva Scholarship Program 2025-26

Description: The BGM Foundation Pashu-Seva Scholarship Program 2025-26 invites applications from meritorious students pursuing courses in Veterinary Science, Animal

Husbandry, Agriculture, Dairy Science, Livestock & Poultry Management, Para Veterinary, Fodder Management or allied fields. Scholars will receive fixed financial support to pursue their studies in animal care and welfare.

Eligibility: Must be an Indian citizen enrolled in a recognised institution in India. Must be pursuing a full-time undergraduate or postgraduate (general/professional) courses (any year) as well as diploma programs in Veterinary Science, Animal Husbandry, Agriculture, Dairy Science, Livestock & Poultry Management, Para Veterinary, Fodder Management or allied fields.

Must have secured a minimum of 50% marks (or equivalent CGPA) in the last qualifying examination. (Note: 5% relaxation to girl students, PwD, single-parent, orphans, first-generation college graduates, students from aspirational or rural districts, studying in government schools, and students from village/rural backgrounds.)

Annual parental income should not exceed INR 8 lakh (from all sources)

Children of employees of Buddy4Study or BGM Foundation are not eligible to apply.

Prizes & Rewards: Selected students will receive a fixed Scholarship per year For Diploma Courses: INR 36,000 For General Graduation / Post-Graduation Courses: INR 36,000 For Professional Graduation / Post-Graduation Courses: INR 75,000

Note:The scholarship fund covers tuition fees, accommodation, food, transport, examination fees, and other academic expenses.

- Last Date to Apply: 16-02-2026
- Application mode: Online applications only
- Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/ABCPSS1
- QR Code: https://dle9eg0t05513.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/bgm-foundation-pashu-seva-scholarship-program-2025-261768888626.png

KASHMIR OBSERVER®

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2

JAMMU AND KASHMIR PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

RESHAM GHAR COLONY, BAKSHI NAGAR, JAMMU - 180001

website:http://jkpsc.nic.in

Jammu: 0191-2566533

Subject: Filling up of posts of Lecturer (Political Science) in the School Education Department- Declaration of result of written test reg.

Notification No. PSC/Exam/S/2026/14 Dated: 23.01.2026

In pursuance of Rule 42 of J&K Public Service Commission (Conduct of Examinations) Rules, 2022 read with Rule 31 and 43 of J&K Public Service Commission (Business & Procedure) Rules, 2021, as amended time to time, the candidates as per **Annexure-A** to this notification are hereby declared to have qualified for the Oral Test/Viva Voce for the posts of **Lecturer (Political Science) in School Education Department** on the basis of their performance in the Written Test which was held on 09.11.2025. The notification with respect to the dates of Interview/Viva-Voce shall be notified separately.

Note:

- For checking the result, candidates are advised to access the official website of the Commission i.e. http://www.jkpsc.nic.in.
- The candidature of candidates shown in **Annexure-A** are purely provisional. The documents of the candidates will be verified at the time of interview and in case any discrepancy with regard to age/qualification/experience and other eligibility conditions is noticed at the time of interview or thereafter, the candidate shall not be allowed to appear in the interview or where the candidate has already appeared in the interview, the candidature shall be deemed to have been cancelled *ab-initio*.
- Only eligible candidates, possessing requisite qualification prescribed under rules, shall be allowed to appear in the Oral Test/Viva-Voce subject to the condition that they are within the prescribed age limit on the cut-off date.
- The candidates shall produce their original certificates/ testimonials on the date of oral test/Viva-Voce.

This is subject to the outcome of writ petition, if any, pending disposal before any competent Court of Law.


(Sachin Jamwal) JKAS,
Controller of Examinations
J&K Public Service Commission

No. PSC/Ex-Secy/2025/33

Dated: 23.01.2026

ANNEXURE-A To Notification No. PSC/Exam/S/2026/14 Dated: 23.01.2026 Lecturer (Political Science)

S.NO.	ROLLNO
1	6800014
2	6800021
3	6800095
4	6800152
5	6800220
6	6800231
7	6800313
8	6800546
9	6800548
10	6800576
11	6800613
12	6800676
13	6800701
14	6800706
15	6800781
16	6800869
17	6800871
18	6800885
19	6800887
20	6800890
21	6801052
22	6801074
23	6801081
24	6801136
25	6801199
26	6801291
27	6801370
28	6801451
29	6801585
30	6801614
31	6801700
32	6801705
33	6801723
34	6801908
35	6801932
36	6802045
37	6802050

S.NO.	ROLLNO
38	6802073
39	6802126
40	6802229
41	6802426
42	6802481
43	6802498
44	6802609
45	6802620
46	6802646
47	6802714
48	6802722
49	6802753
50	6802871
51	6802924
52	6803018
53	6803055
54	6803066
55	6803203
56	6803217
57	6803224
58	6803565
59	6803577
60	6803640
61	6803660
62	6803712
63	6803761
64	6803855
65	6803865
66	6803937
67	6804042
68	6804113
69	6804154
70	6804183
71	6804243
72	6804299
73	6804301
74	6804304

S.NO.	ROLLNO
75	6804315
76	6804347
77	6804411
78	6804442
79	6804529
80	6804643
81	6804833
82	6804907
83	6805158
84	6805230
85	6805234
86	6805493
87	6805554
88	6805568
89	6805573
90	6805622
91	6805624
92	6805956
93	6805980
94	6806006
95	6806144
96	6806200
97	6806264
98	6806365
99	6806384
100	6806497
101	6806627
102	6806682
103	6806699
104	6806810
105	6806830
106	6806884
107	6806936
108	6806943
109	6806948
110	6807033
111	6807047

S.NO.	ROLLNO
112	6807089
113	6807090
114	6807094
115	6807107
116	6807150
117	6807175
118	6807180
119	6807252
120	6807256
121	6807383
122	6807434
123	6807439
124	6807545
125	6807588

S.NO.	ROLLNO
126	6807713
127	6807736
128	6807746
129	6808011
130	6808034
131	6808073
132	6808141
133	6808196
134	6808248
135	6808261
136	6808295
137	6808355
138	6808450
139	6808462

S.NO.	ROLLNO
140	6808658
141	6808769
142	6808908
143	6808953
144	6808958
145	6808963
146	6808997
147	6809014
148	6809035
149	6809096
150	6809140
151	6809191
152	6809233


(Sachin Jamwal) JKAS,
Controller of Examinations
J&K Public Service Commission

DIPK-10326/25 dated: 24-01-2026

Government of Jammu and Kashmir

OFFICE OF THE CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROJECT OFFICER POSHAN PROJECT PULWAMA

PUBLIC NOTICE

Subject: - Provisional Selection list of Sangini (Anganwadi Worker) for AWC Murran-E, Panchayat Halqa Murran, Ward No 10 of Poshan Project Pulwama, inviting of objections thereof.

No: CDPO/Poshan/Pul/26/686-95 Dated: 24-01-2026

Whereas, the honorary post of AWW had been advertised vide No: CDPO/Poshan/Adv/2024/730-42 Dated:-20.12.2024 for AWC Murran-E, Panchayat Halqa Murran, and Ward No: 10 against which this office had received 09 application forms from eligible candidates.

Whereas, candidate figuring namely Sheikh Sania Wakeel had submitted a Panch Ward Certificate wherein it was mentioned that the family (and not the candidate) of the said candidate Sheikh Sania Wakeel D/O Wakeel Ahmad Sheikh R/O Murran, falls under Panch Ward No 10 and as such she had been instructed to produce Panch Ward Certificate mentioning that she i.e., Sheikh Sania Wakeel D/O Wakeel Ahmad Sheikh is enlisted in the Electoral Roll and herself falls under Panch Ward No 10 but she could not produce the requisite certificate before the last date of submitting application forms as the concerned RDD Block had not updated the Electoral Voter List and as such her application form was not accepted on account of deficient documents.

Whereas, the name of the said candidate was present in the Additional Electoral Voter List at Serial no. 1137, KNM0223206, which were yet to be updated as on 26-07-2024.

Whereas, the said candidate approached Hon'ble High Court of J&K and consequently directions were passed to this office by the Hon'ble High Court of J&K in WP(C) 3046/2024 CM (8283/2024) dated 27-12-2024 to entertain the application form of Sheikh Sania Wakeel at her own risk and responsibility and in compliance with Hon'ble High Court directions, her application form was accepted. However, the matter remained subjudice.

Whereas, the said candidate had already produced Domicile Certificate issued by Tehsildar concerned mentioning that Sheikh Sania Wakeel D/O Wakeel Ahmad Sheikh is a permanent resident of Village/Panchayat Halqa Murran, and also the said candidate had already produced Unmarried Certificate issued by Tehsildar concerned mentioning that Sheikh Sania Wakeel D/O Wakeel Ahmad Sheikh R/O Murran had been unmarried as on 13-12-2024 and it is pertinent to mention here that the onus of her name not getting updated in the Electoral voter List lied with the concerned RDD block.

Whereas, the candidate Sheikh Sania Wakeel D/O Wakeel Ahmad Sheikh had produced the requisite Panch Ward Certificate issued by BDO Pulwama vide No: BDO/Pul/3566 dated 20-01-2025, which was after the last date of submission of application form i.e., 05-01-2025 and as such the merit list was not finalized.

Whereas, the Hon'ble High Court of J&K in its judgement in WP(C) 3046/2024 dated 16-12-2025 disposing off this petition has passed directions to the undersigned that the result for the post of AWW for Panchayat Halqa Murran, Panch Ward No 10, shall be declared within a period of two months, after considering the cases of candidates including the petitioner subject to their eligibility.

As such in relaxation of rules and in compliance with the directions of Hon'ble High Court of J&K, this office has prepared the Merit List and Provisional Selection list of applicants, as approved by the Selection Committee members, as under published for information of public in general and Applicants/Candidates in particular for filing appeal/Objections if any. The appeal/Objection if any against the selection list shall be filed in the office of the Child Development Project Officer Poshan Project Pulwama against proper receipt up to 02-02-2026 (up to 04:30 PM) in black and white. No objection /Appeal shall be entertained after expiry of last date of filing Appeal/objection.

S. No	Name of Applicant	Parentage/Spouse Name	Date of Birth	Qualification	Marks obtained/ Maximum marks (in 12 th)	Percent age	Remarks
01	Sheikh Sania Wakeel	Wakeel Ahmad Sheikh	24.09.2005	12th	421/500	84.2%	Provisionally Selected
02	Darakhshan Bashir	Bashir Ahmad Yatoo	06.06.1995	Graduate	363/500	72.6%	Waiting 01
03	Omaisa Ashaq	Ashaq Hussain Yatoo	15.03.2000	Graduate	360/500	72.0%	
04	Sabena Jan	Arshid Ahmad Yatoo	0.04.1992	Graduate	517/750	68.9%	
05	Summy Jamal	Mohammad Jamal Sheikh	25.03.1998	Graduate	310/500	62.0%	
06	Aasima Ashaq	Ashaq Hussain Yatoo	23.03.1993	Graduate	444/750	59.2%	
07	Saima Farooq	Mohammad Farooq Sheikh	15.03.2002	Graduate	277/500	55.4%	
08	Saima Nazir	Nazir Ahmad Sheikh	30.11.1996	Graduate	248/500	49.6%	
09	Raihana Bashir	Bashir Ahmad Matoo	08.03.2001	Graduate	234/500	46.8%	

Sd/-

Child Development Project Officer,

Poshan Project Pulwama.

DIPK-10345/25 dated: 24-01-2026

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PUBLIC NOTICE

My name has been wrongly written in my school records as Guffraan Tasleem Beigh while my correct name as per DOB certificate is Siyaam Tasleem Beigh . Now I have applied for the correction of the same . If anybody has any objection in thsi regard he/she may file them in the office of the . Ingenious school elahi bagh within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Siyaam Tasleem Beigh
Class5th Roll 4
D/o Tasleem Rashid Beigh
R/o Al Hamza Colony Buchpora Srinagar

mcl

OFFICE OF EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE 1ST CLASS ZAINGEER BOMAI

Subject: Issuance of registration order in respect of delayed Birth & Death

Public Notice

This office has received a written application from Roshana Mushtaq D/o Mushtaq Ahmad Lone R/o , Tehsil Zaingeer for issuance of Birth & Death certificate in favour ofSELF Born on 08-04-2013 and as per document evidence produced by the applicant.

In this regard, if anyone has any objection, he/she may file the same before the undersigned within 07 days.

After that, no objection whatsoever will be entertained by this office.

Tehsildar
Executive Magistrate
Bomai

fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

TheelectricityconnectionwithconsumerID:-0202040007117 registered in the name of Roof Ahmad Khan,S/O Abdul Hamid Khan, R/O Khan Colony Chanpora is to be transferred in favour of Imtiyaz Ahmad Bala, S/O Late Noor Mohammad Bala, R/O Khan Colony Chanpora.. Objections,if any,must reach ESD Baghat within a week at the most.

INF

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER BUDGAM

Subject:- Necessary Correction/change in address in data to the License No.JK-0420130020455 issued in favour of MOHD SHAFI MALIK Parentage ABDUL RAHEEM MALIK

Whereas an application has been recieved by one MOHD SHAFI MALIK Parentage ABDUL RAHEEM MALIK wherein he claimed that the Fathers Name has been wrongly recorded in the records of Driving Licenses as AB RAHIM MALIK Which needs to be changed as ABDUL RAHEEM MALIK Now therefore it is notified for the information of the general public that objections if any in this regard shal reach in written in the office of the Assistant Regional Transport office Budgam within a period of 7 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper.After expiry of stipulated time no objection will be entertained.

mcb

Assistant Regional Transport officer
Budgam Kashmir



Fire Breaks Out at Guest House, One Injured

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: One person sustained injuries after a fire broke out at a guest house near Dal Lake, opposite Ghat Number 1, in Srinagar on Saturday morning, officials said, adding that no loss of life was reported in the incident.

According to Fire and Emergency Services officials, after receiving a distress call, Fire tenders and personnel from Fire Station Nehru Park rushed to the spot immediately. Due to the congested nature of the locality, additional reinforcements were dispatched from Fire and Emergency Services Headquarters, Fire Station Baddemb, and Fire Station Rainawari.

On arrival, firefighters found that a three-story guest house identified as "Dal Fog" was engulfed in flames and had suffered extensive damage. Firefighting operations were launched promptly, and the blaze was brought under control within a short period, preventing it from spreading to adjoining structures.

Officials said one person was injured in the incident and was

shifted for medical treatment. The guest house, however, suffered severe damage due to the fire.

Preliminary investigation has ruled out a short circuit as the cause of the fire. Officials said further investigation has been initiated to ascertain the exact cause of the incident.

The Special Dog Squad of Fire and Emergency Services was also pressed into service to check for the presence of any bodies or inflammable materials inside the structure.

The firefighting operation was led by DFO Headquarters Muzaffar Ali Bhat under the direct supervision of Deputy Director Fire and Emergency Services Dr Mir Aqib Hussain, and Mobilising Officer Ajiaz Ahmad Shah.

As per KNT, ADGP Fire and Emergency Services Shri Alok Kumar has urged the general public to strictly adhere to fire safety norms and ensure that electrical gadgets are not left unattended, particularly during peak hours.

Officials reiterated that while one injury was reported, no fatalities occurred in the incident.

Public Invited to Republic Day Celebrations Across Kashmir



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: As preparations enter the final phase, Kashmir is set to witness Republic Day celebrations under a comprehensive and tightly coordinated security framework, with authorities encouraging public participation in the national event.

Inspector General of Police Kashmir V K Birdi said elaborate multi-tier security arrangements have been put in place across the Valley to ensure peaceful and smooth Republic Day celebrations. He said security deployment involves the Jammu and Kashmir Police along with central paramilitary forces, forming a layered security grid at all venues.

Speaking to media persons after reviewing arrangements during a full-dress rehearsal at Bakshi Stadium, Srinagar, the IGP said the main function will

be held at the stadium, while similar celebrations will take place at district headquarters across the Valley.

Birdi said the arrangements are aimed not only at ensuring security but also at facilitating public participation. He urged people to attend the celebrations with their families and said school children should also be encouraged to take part.

"The Republic Day function is an open event. People are warmly welcome to join the celebrations and be part of the national spirit," he said.

He said security measures have been planned in a manner that allows smooth conduct of events without causing inconvenience to the public. Officials said coordination among different security agencies remains in place to respond swiftly to any situation and ensure that celebrations pass off peacefully across the Valley.

Police Launches Searches in Lawaypora

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Srinagar police on Saturday said to have launched a massive search operation in Lawaypora area on the outskirts of Srinagar, officials said.

An official said that multiple security units have been pressed into service and a comprehensive cordon has been laid in the area. "All houses and open fields are being thoroughly checked, particularly those under suspicion," he said.

The operation, he added, was initiated following inputs suggesting the possible movement of sus-



picious individuals in the locality. According to CNS, he said additional reinforcements have been deployed from other agencies as well to ensure the area remains fully sealed during the ongoing search.

Srinagar Airport Operations Normalised; Six Delhi Flights Cancelled



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A day after snowfall disrupted air traffic and grounded several flights, normal operations resumed at the Srinagar International Airport on Saturday morning, officials said.

They said, however, six flights to and from Delhi were cancelled due to temporary airspace restrictions imposed in connection with the Republic Day celebrations.

An airport official told KNO that the cancellations were caused by a NOTAM (Notice to Airmen) at the Delhi Airport, effective from 10:20 am to 12:45 pm.

"Except for the six cancellations due to the NOTAM at Delhi Airport, flight operations were later returned to normal, with aircraft from different parts of the country arriving and departing as per schedule," he said.

The official advised passengers to check with their respective air-

EXCEPT FOR THE SIX CANCELLATIONS DUE TO THE NOTAM AT DELHI AIRPORT, flight operations were later returned to normal, with aircraft from different parts of the country arriving and departing as per schedule,"

lines for real-time flight updates before heading to the airport.

Earlier, the IAF lifted restrictions after the AAI and BRO cleared snow from the apron and taxiways. "Indian Air Force has lifted the NOTAM for commercial

operations. Airports Authority of India, in close coordination with BRO, has successfully cleared the apron and taxiways. A joint inspection is currently underway, and flight operations are expected to resume shortly, subject to safety clearance. Passengers are advised to stay in touch with their respective airlines for the latest updates," Srinagar Airport Tweeted on X (formerly Twitter).

Following the situation in a fresh tweet, the authorities shared the information of the first flight arriving in the Valley. "A smooth landing at 1100 hrs. Srinagar Airport welcomes its first flight of the day. All is normal now — the big bird has returned to the Valley," another tweet read.

It is worth mentioning that on Friday, more than a dozen flights were cancelled due to low visibility and runway closure following the season's first snowfall, leaving hundreds of passengers stranded.

SKIMS RECRUITMENT

Delay in Senior Residents Selection List Leaves Applicants in Lurch

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The prolonged and unexplained delay in the declaration of the senior resident selection list at Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS), Soura, has triggered widespread concern and uncertainty among dozens of doctors who appeared for the recruitment process earlier this month.

According to the details available with KNO, SKIMS Soura had issued a notification inviting applications for the recruitment of Senior Resident doctors across various departments, with December 20, 2025, set as the last date for submission of forms. The interviews for the posts were conducted on January 2 and 3, 2026. However, more than 20 days have passed since the conclusion of the process, and the final selection list is yet to be published.

Candidates said that they have made repeated attempts to seek clarity from the office of the Dean Academics and the Academic Registrar, but have received only verbal assurances. "We were repeatedly told that the list would be released within two days, but those assurances never materialised," one of the candidates said.

According to several applicants, they were recently informed by the Dean Academics that the selection list has already been finalised and is awaiting approval from the Director, SKIMS.

However, the Director remains inaccessible to the candidates, and no official notification, explanation, or timeline has been issued by the institution so far,



the applicants claimed.

The lack of transparency has placed many young doctors at a critical crossroads in their careers. "We are unsure whether to wait for the SKIMS list or apply for positions elsewhere. The delay is costing us opportunities and adding to mental stress," another candidate said, adding that many applicants are bound by age limits and fixed recruitment cycles.

Ironically, the delay comes at a time when SKIMS Soura is facing an acute shortage of doctors in almost all departments, a fact acknowledged even by several Heads of Departments.

Candidates argue that the absence of Senior Residents is not only affecting their careers but also impacting patient care in one of the premier tertiary healthcare institutions of Jammu and Kashmir.

"The interviews are done, eligibility is verified, and yet the list is being withheld without any written justification. This raises serious questions about administrative efficiency and fairness," said

another applicant.

Doctors have expressed dissatisfaction over what they describe as an arbitrary and opaque recruitment process, pointing out that prolonged silence and repeated verbal commitments without action are demoralising and unjust.

The candidates have now appealed to the concerned authorities to intervene and ensure either the immediate publication of the final selection list or the issuance of an official written communication clearly explaining the reasons for the delay along with a definite timeline.

They maintained that while they have shown patience and professionalism throughout the process, continued uncertainty is unfair to both aspiring doctors and patients who depend on the institution for specialised care.

"There is still hope that the administration will act promptly in the interest of transparency, fairness, and the smooth functioning of SKIMS Soura," the candidates said.

Rains Cause Waterlogging in City Areas

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Rains in Srinagar have triggered waterlogging on major roads and residential localities of the city, resulting in traffic congestion and inconvenience to commuters and pedestrians.

Areas including Batamaloo, Rajouri Kadal and Bemina near the flyover witnessed extensive accumulation of rainwater, making road movement difficult and slowing down vehicular traffic for hours.

In Batamaloo, commuters said

waterlogging on key stretches caused frequent traffic snarls. "The road was completely waterlogged, and vehicles were moving at a snail's pace. This has become a routine problem whenever it rains," said Ghulam Ahmad, a local resident.

At Rajouri Kadal, residents blamed clogged drains and poor drainage management for the situation. "Rainwater remained on the road for a long time, causing serious inconvenience to pedestrians and shopkeepers," said Mohammad Shafi, a local.

Similar scenes were witnessed

in Bemina near the flyover, where water accumulated on the carriageway, disrupting the smooth flow of traffic. "This area faces waterlogging after every rainfall, and commuters suffer daily because of it," said Farooq Ahmad, a regular commuter.

Residents urged the Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) to take effective measures to ensure timely drainage of rainwater and prevent recurring waterlogging. "Desilting of drains and proper maintenance should be taken up on a priority basis," said a resident from Bemina.

- TRAFFIC POLICE : 9419993745, 01998-266686
- PCR: 0194-2452092, 2455883
- PDD: 0194-2450213
- FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES : 2479488, 2452222, 2452155
- CAPD: 18001807011
- SMC HEALTH OFFICER: 9469409081
- Ambulance: Kashmir EMS Service: +91 94841 00200

AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

RAILWAYS

- SRINAGAR: 0194-2103259
- ANANTNAG: 01932-228243
- BARAMULLA: 0194-102029
- BIJBHERA: 01932-228243
- PAMPORE: 01933-294132
- PATTAN: 01954-293507
- QAZIGUND: 01951-296153

HIGHWAY STATUS

- Sgr-Jammu highway - (CLOSED)
- Mughal Road - (CLOSED)
- Srinagar-Leh- (CLOSED)



PRAYERS

FAJR	6:06
ZUHR	12:42
ASR	4:16
Magrib	5:57
ISHA	7:21

This Day In History

- 1348 - Friuli Earthquake in European southern Alps measuring approximately 6.9, largely destroys Villach, killing 5,000
- 1565 - Battle at Talikota India: Deccan sultanate destroy Vijayanagar's army and the last Hindu kingdom of Southern India
- 1579 - Treaty of Utrecht signed, marks beginning of Dutch Republic
- 1721 - Tsar Peter the Great ends Russian-orthodox patriarchy
- 1755- Moscow University is established by Elizabeth of Russia and founded by Mikhail Lomonosov on Tatiana Day
- 1840 - American naval expedition under Charles Wilkes is first to identify Antarctica as a new continent
- 1964 - Echo 2, US communications satellite launched
- 1971 - Himachal Pradesh becomes 18th Indian state
- 1971 - Military coup in Uganda under Major General Idi Amin
- 1974 - Dr Christiaan Barnard transplants 1st heterotopic heart transplant (adding donor heart without removal of old)
- 1975 - Bangladeshi parliament disposes of premier Sheikh Mujibur Rahman
- 1979 - 1st documented case of a robot killing a human in US
- 1980 - Highest speed attained by a warship, 167 kph, USN hovercraft
- 1983 - Infrared telescope satellite launched into polar orbit
- 1988 US VP George H. W. Bush & Dan Rather clash on "CBS Evening News" as Rather attempts to question Bush about his role in Iran-Contra affair.
- 1990 - Avianca Flight 52, runs out of fuel & crashes in Cove Neck NY, 73 die.
- 1992 - Hubble space telescope optics finds NGC3862/3C264.
- 1994 - Mine fire at Asansol, India, kills 55
- 1994 - US space probe Clementine launched from Vandenberg Air Force Base, California
- 2001 - A 50-year-old Douglas DC-3 crashes near Ciudad Bolivar, Venezuela killing 24.
- 2002 - Wikipedia switches to the new version of its software ("Phase II") aka Magnus Manske Day.
- 2005 - A stampede at the Mandher Devi temple in Mandhradevi in India kills at least 258.
- 2006 - Three independent observing campaigns announce the discovery of OGLE-2005-BLG-390Lb through gravitational microlensing, the first cool rocky/icy extrasolar planet around a main-sequence star.
- 2010 - Ethiopian Airlines Flight 409 crashes into the Mediterranean Sea shortly after take-off from Beirut Rafic Hariri International Airport, killing all 90 people on-board.
- 2011- Egyptian Revolution of 2011 begins with a series of street demonstrations, rallies, acts of civil disobedience, labor strikes and violent clashes in Cairo, Alexandria and other major cities

SAD DEMISE

With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the demise of Fayaz Ahmad Dar S/o Late Abdul Khaliq Dar R/O Old Barzulla Srinagar (Nasti Mohalla). He departed for his eternal rest on 23 January, 2026 (Friday). The mourning will be held for three days only till Monday. We pray that Almighty Allah grants the departed soul eternal peace and highest place in Jannat-ul-Firdous (Ameen).

LADIES ARE REQUESTED NOT TO BRING ANY KIND OF EATABLES.

BEREAVED DAR FAMILY
CONTACT NOS:

7006084493/9596177967



Abbasi Ads.

CBSE Mandates Mental Health, Career Counsellors in Affiliated Schools

Press Trust Of India

Kota: In a significant policy reform aimed at strengthening students' mental health and providing them with career guidance, the Central Board of Secondary Education has made the appointment of socio-emotional and career counsellors mandatory in all affiliated schools.

For this, the national education board amended Clause 2.4.12 of the CBSE Affiliation Bye-Laws, 2018, following a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed before the Rajasthan High Court in July 2025 by Kota-based advocate Sujet Swami and some psychology experts.

The PIL highlighted rising mental health challenges among students, including academic stress and lack of structured career guidance, and sought mandatory provisions for qualified counsellors and a uniform mental health support framework in schools.

During the hearing in September 2025, a bench headed by the Chief Justice of Rajasthan High Court sought responses and suggestions from the CBSE, the Rajasthan Board of Secondary Education (RBSE), the University Grants Commission, and the state government. After considering the submissions, the CBSE introduced key amendments through a circular on January 19, 2026.

Under the revised provisions, the CBSE has added two new sub-clauses. Clause

2.4.12.1 mandates that every CBSE school appoint one regular Counselling and Wellness Teacher, or socio-emotional counsellor, for every 500 students. Clause 2.4.12.2 makes the appointment of a Career Counsellor compulsory.

Earlier, CBSE norms required the appointment of a full-time psychological counsellor only in schools having more than 300 students in Classes 9 to 12, while smaller schools were permitted to engage part-time counsellors.

The education board has prescribed minimum eligibility criteria for these counsellors.

The Counselling and Wellness Teacher must possess a graduate or postgraduate degree in Psychology or a post-graduate degree in Social Work with specialisation in mental health or counselling. They must also undergo a mandatory 50-hour CBSE-recognised capacity-building programme.

Their responsibilities include student and parent counselling, social-emotional learning, crisis intervention, identification of mental health concerns, sensitisation of teachers and parents, and maintaining confidentiality and ethical standards.

The CBSE has also introduced flexibility for smaller schools through a Counselling Hub and Spoke School Model, under which "Hub" schools mentor nearby "Spoke" schools.

For career guidance, it has mandated a student-to-counsellor ratio of 1:500 for students of Classes 9 to 12.

Trump Threatens Canada with 100% Tariffs Over China Deal

By By MICHELLE L. PRICE

Washington, Jan 24 (AP) President Donald Trump on Saturday threatened to impose a 100 per cent tariff on goods imported from Canada if America's northern neighbour went ahead with its trade deal with China.

Trump said in a social media post that if Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney "thinks he is going to make Canada a Drop Off Port" for China to send goods and products into the United States, he is sorely mistaken.

While Trump has waged a trade war over the past year, Canada this month negotiated a deal to lower tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles in return for lower import taxes on Canadian farm products.

Trump initially had said that agreement was what Carney "should be doing and it's a good thing for him to sign a trade deal."

Carney's office did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Trump's threat came amid an escalating war of words with Carney as the Re-



publican president's push to acquire Greenland strained the NATO alliance. Trump had commented while in Davos, Switzerland, this week that "Canada lives because of the United States." Carney shot back that his nation can be an example that the world does not have to bend toward autocratic tendencies.

Trump later revoked his invitation to Carney to join the president's "Board of Peace" that he is forming to

try to resolve global conflicts.

Trump's push to acquire Greenland has come after he has repeatedly needled Canada over its sovereignty and suggested it also be absorbed the United States as a 51st state.

He resumed that this week, posting an altered image on social media showing a map of the United States that included Canada, Venezuela, Greenland and Cuba as part of its territory.

Iran Forces Have 'Finger on Trigger': IRGC

Agencies

Tehran- Iran's elite Revolutionary Guard is "more ready than ever, finger on the trigger," its commander said Saturday, as US warships headed toward the Middle East.

Nournews, a news outlet close to Iran's Supreme National Security Council, reported that the commander, Gen. Mohammad Pakpour, warned the United States and Israel "to avoid any miscalculation."

"The Islamic Revolutionary Guards and dear Iran stand more ready than ever, finger on the trigger, to execute the orders and directives of the Commander-in-Chief," report quoted general as saying.

Tension remains high between Iran and the US in the wake of a bloody unrest that began on December 28, triggered by the collapse of Iran's currency, the rial, and swept the country for about two weeks.

Trump's warnings On Thursday President Donald Trump said aboard Air Force One that the US was moving warships toward Iran "just in case" he wants to take action.

"We have a massive fleet heading in that direction, and maybe we won't have to use it," Trump said.

A US Navy official said that the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln and other warships travelling with it were in the In-



dian Ocean.

Trump also mentioned the multiple rounds of talks American officials had with Iran over its nuclear programme before Israel launched a 12-day war against the Islamic Republic in June, which also saw US warplanes bomb Iranian nuclear sites. He threatened Iran with military action that would make earlier US strikes against Iranian uranium enrichment sites "look like peanuts".

"They should have made a deal before we hit them," Trump said.

Airline jitters

The tension has led at least one European airline to cancel some flights to the wider region, with Air France saying it had decided to temporarily suspend its service to Dubai in the UAE.

The airline cancelled two return flights from Paris to Dubai over the weekend, saying, with-

out elaborating, that it was due to the current situation in the Middle East. It said it would resume its service to Dubai later on Saturday.

"The airline is closely following developments in the Middle East in real time and continuously monitors the geopolitical situation in the territories served and overflown by its aircraft in order to ensure the highest level of flight safety and security," the company said.

Arrival information at Dubai's international airport also showed the cancellation of Saturday flights from Amsterdam by Dutch carriers KLM and Transavia, and a flight from Luxembourg by Luxair. The airlines did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Some flights from KLM were also cancelled on Friday and Saturday to Tel Aviv, Israel, according to online flight trackers.

Pak Rights Lawyer, Husband Jailed 17 Years Over Posts

By Sajjad Hussain

Islamabad, (PTI) Pakistan's eminent human rights lawyer Imran Zainab Mazari-Hazir and her husband, lawyer Hadi Ali Chattha, were on Saturday sentenced to a total of 17 years in prison each in a case about social media posts.

The case was based on a complaint filed on August 12, 2025, at the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) in Islamabad, accusing the two of controversial social media posts.

The NCCIA complaint accused Mazari-Hazir of "propagating narratives that align with hostile terrorist groups and proscribed organisations", while her husband was implicated for reposting some of her posts.

They were indicted in the case on October 30 last year and arrested on Friday in the capital, Islamabad, while en route to court and later sent to jail on a 14-day judicial remand.

Additional District and Sessions Court presided by Judge Mohammad Afzal Majoka announced the sentence after the two accused boycotted the proceedings after briefly appearing through a video-link from the Adiala Jail, Rawalpindi.

A court order written by Judge Majoka said that the "prosecution has been able to prove its case against both the accused" under various sections of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA).

Geo News reported that the two were each sentenced to five years imprisonment under Section 9, ten years under Section 10 and two years under Section 26-A.

The sentence was announced after Mazari-Hazir refused to attend the proceedings upon learning that the media had been barred from the courtroom.

"Is the media present in court?" she asked during the hearing before alleging, "We are being subjected to torture. We are not being given food or water."

Mazari then announced, "We are boycotting the court proceedings."

The judge responded by asking, "You mean you do not want to be part of the proceedings?" and told them to "wait for the decision."

When the couple left their chairs, the judge ordered his staff to provide details of all recordings and later issued the order of conviction.

Earlier, Majoka had issued their arrest warrants on January 16, a day after cancelling their interim bail due to repeated non-appearances.

Mazari-Hazir's mother, Dr Shireen Mazari, who was a human rights minister in the government of former prime minister Imran Khan, confirmed the arrest on Friday.

She said that her daughter and son-in-law "have been arrested, put in separate cars, and taken away to unknown locations."

Indians World's Most Abandoned Seafarers in 2025

Press Trust Of India

London: Indians are the most abandoned nationality of seafarers for the second consecutive year as 1,125 cases of abandonment were logged at the end of 2025, a UK-headquartered global union of transport workers has found.

The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) said that abandonment worldwide hit record levels last year as it released new data showing 6,223 seafarers abandoned across 410 ships.

The ITF welcomed the Indian government's "blacklisting" measures to protect its seafarers from ships as a result of repeat abandonments and other bad practices.

"It's nothing short of a disgrace that, yet again, we are seeing record numbers of seafarers abandoned by unscrupulous ship owners," said David Heindel, Chair of the ITF Seafarers' Section.

"Every day, all around the world, seafarers face horrific violations of their human and labour rights, all so that bottom-feeding companies can make a quick buck at their expense.

"It's very clear that this is a systemic issue in the industry – and that means we need the entire industry to come together with seafarers and their unions to say, 'enough is enough', and take action together to end this crisis," he said.

Seafarer abandonment is defined by the International

“It's nothing short of a disgrace that, yet again, we are seeing record numbers of seafarers abandoned by unscrupulous ship owners

Maritime Organisation (IMO), headquartered in London, under three criteria: failing to cover the cost of a seafarer's repatriation; leaving a seafarer without necessary maintenance and support; unilaterally severing ties with a seafarer, including failure to pay contractual wages for a period of at least two months.

According to the ITF analysis, the worst region for abandonment was the Middle East, followed by Europe. The two countries where most ship abandonments occurred were Türkiye (61) and the United Arab Emirates (54) – both of which were found to have significantly higher abandonments than any other country.

'Netanyahu Skipped Davos Amid Arrest Fears'



Trans Asia News

Jerusalem: The outlets carried the report on Wednesday, noting that the regime's president Isaac Herzog replaced Netanyahu at the event, where he met with German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock a day earlier.

During the meeting, Herzog complained about the absence of Israeli officials from the forum and called for the removal of ICC arrest warrants issued against Israeli officials, describing the court's actions as "politically motivated."

Herzog, however, stopped short of addressing the reason for the issuance of the warrants that call for the arrest of Netanyahu and Yoav Gallant, his minister for military affairs at the time, over war

crimes and crimes against humanity in the Gaza Strip.

The crimes stem from the regime's war of genocide on Gaza that had begun in October 2023, and has so far claimed the lives of more than 71,000 Palestinians, mostly women and children.

According to the court, which issued the warrants in 2024, there were reasonable grounds to believe the two were responsible for crimes including the use of starvation as a method of warfare, intentionally directing attacks against civilians, and crimes against humanity such as murder, persecution, and other inhumane acts.

The ICC warrants have been circulated to the 125 states party to the Rome Statute that helped found the court.

The states are legally obligated to arrest Netanyahu and Gallant if they enter their territory. Switzerland, host of the Davos forum, is a signatory to the treaty.

Ever since the launch of the war, presence of various Israeli officials, troops, and even sports teams across various countries have triggered massive popular protests by those denouncing the regime's atrocities and calling for the arrest and prosecution of those responsible.

Have Some 'Issues' With Party, Will Take Them Up: Tharoor

Kozhikode (Kerala), Jan 24 (PTI) Congress MP Shashi Tharoor on Saturday said he has some "issues" with the party which he would take up with the leadership, but asserted that he has never violated the organisation's stated positions in the Parliament.

Any internal differences should be discussed within the organisation and not through the media, he said.

His remarks come amid reports that Tharoor is upset over Shashi Tharoor Gandhi not adequately acknowledging his presence at a recent event in Kochi and over alleged repeated attempts by state party leaders to sideline him.

"All I can say is that there are issues which I need to take up with my own party leadership and not in a public forum...I will be going to Delhi for Parliament and I will get an opportunity, I believe, to make my concerns very clear to the party leadership and get their viewpoint...have a proper conversation."

"I am in Congress for the past 17 years. Let's not go too far...as far as I am concerned, whatever has gone wrong, needs to be addressed and it will be addressed in an ap-

propriate forum," he told PTI Videos.

Speaking to reporters here, the Thiruvananthapuram MP said he had informed the Congress leadership about his inability to attend a party meeting.

He said that some reports about him might be true, while others could be false.

Tharoor explained that he wanted to attend a literature festival and that continuous travel was difficult.

"However, I will certainly attend all party activities in Parliament, and at that time I can meet the party leadership," he said.

Responding to a question on alleged unfair treatment at a party event in Kochi, Tharoor said he would not comment on it.

He also said that he wanted to exhibit his book on Sree Narayana Guru at the literature



festival.

Recalling an earlier instance, he said he had once been unable to attend the Jaipur Literature Festival due to a political engagement. Earlier, answering questions during

a session at the Kerala Literature Festival here, Tharoor said he had taken a strong stand on Operation Sindoor and remained "unapologetic," about it.

Explaining his position, Tharoor said that as an observer, commentator and writer, he had written a newspaper column after the Pahalgam terror attack, stating that it should not go unpunished and that there should be a kinetic response.

He said that while India is focused on development, it should not be dragged into a prolonged conflict with Pakistan, and that any action should be limited to targeting terrorist camps.

Tharoor said that to his surprise, the Indian government did exactly what he had recommended.

"How could I be expected to criticise it when I myself recommended it. I supported it fully throughout Operation Sindoor and afterwards," he said.

When the government sent him abroad as part of a multi-party delegation over Operation Sindoor, his party, for some reason, did not like it.

"You can speak to them and find out," he said Tharoor said it was Jawaharlal Nehru who posed the famous question: "Who lives if India dies."

"When India is at stake, when India's security and its place in the world are involved, India comes first," he said.

He added that political parties may have differences as part of the process of building a better India, but when national interests are involved, India must prevail.

Terrorists had gunned down 26 people, mostly tourists, in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam in April 2025, sending shockwaves across the country. In response, India launched Operation Sindoor, a precision military offensive targeting terror launchpads in Pakistan.

N E W S M A K E R S

Train Service Witnesses Huge Rush as Highway Remains Closed



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: As the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway remained closed for the second consecutive day due to slippery conditions, train services witnessed heavy rush with coaches jam-packed. The railways arranged two additional reserved special trains to cater to the surge in passengers.

This reporter visited the highway and the railway station and found tourists stranded on the highway at Qazigund, who later returned to Anantnag railway station and boarded overcrowded trains.

Ishfaq, a tourist from Jaipur, told KNO that all roads in the Kashmir Valley were closed, forcing them to travel by train. "We

tried to travel by road but were asked to return. Now we are heading by train," he said. Mohammad Asralan, also from Jaipur, said they have been stuck on the highway for the last two days and decided to travel by train due to the on-going disruption.

"Train is the only option left for us as we were stranded. All seats are booked and no ticket is available. The train is fully packed," he said, adding that direct train service to Delhi should be introduced to ease the suffering of passengers.

Shauita, a passenger from Noida, said they were still unsure about their travel plan as the station was overcrowded. "There is too much rush inside the train and no place for passengers," she said.

Passengers urged that the highway should be restored as soon as possible.

Railways said that two reserved special trains have been planned owing to the closure of the highway and the heavy rush of passengers.

"In view of extremely heavy passenger rush between Katra and Srinagar due to closure of roads and flights owing to inclement weather, it is proposed to run suitable reserved special trains on the route of the non-running Vande Bharat on 27th and 28th January 2026 between Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra and Srinagar and vice-versa, with en-route stoppage at Banihal, so that at least two train services remain available on the section," the communication said.

Railways Conduct Intensive Ticket Check on Katra-Srinagar Section

JAMMU: In a bid to curb ticketless travel and ensure safe, secure and comfortable journeys for passengers, the Jammu Division of Northern Railway conducted an intensive and surprise ticket checking drive on the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra-Srinagar rail section on January 23 and 24.

The drive was carried out across all stations and trains falling under the section and was led by teams constituted under the supervision of Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Jammu Division, Uchit Singhal. The operation was conducted in coordination with the Railway Protection Force (RPF) and the Government Railway Police (GRP).

During the two-day drive, action was taken against 296 passengers found travelling without valid tickets, resulting in the imposition of fines amounting to approximately ₹3.20 lakh, officials said.

The intensified checks were undertaken in view of the recent heavy snowfall in Kashmir, which disrupted flight operations and

road connectivity, prompting a surge in passenger movement towards rail transport.

Commenting on the drive, Senior Divisional Commercial Manager Uchit Singhal said the initiative was launched to manage increased passenger traffic and prevent unauthorised travel. "Due to the snowfall on January 23, which affected flights and road transport, passenger rush on trains increased. Accordingly, intensive checks were conducted to curb ticketless and unauthorised travel," he said.

He added that ticket checking staff also extended assistance to stranded passengers in boarding trains and used the opportunity to create awareness among travellers about the importance of carrying valid tickets and adhering to railway rules.

Northern Railway said such surprise drives will continue from time to time to maintain discipline, enhance passenger safety and improve overall travel experience. (Observer News Service)

75% Roads Cleared, But Interior Kashmir Still Struggles After Snowfall

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Several remote areas of the Kashmir Valley on Saturday accused the government of failing to clear snow from roads, causing significant inconvenience to residents.

The residents of Ringzabal and Khansahib areas of Budgam district told KNO that snow had remained uncleared in interior roads, leaving an ambulance stranded.

"We called several times, but no help arrived. It was terrifying when a patient needed urgent care," said a resident from Khansahib.

In the Charar-i-Sharief constituency, villagers urged immediate action after snowfall blocked several interior roads. "While the administration has cleared the main road, many interior routes remain cut off due to accumulated snow," said Hakeem Ahmad, a local resident.

Similar complaints came from Ramhall and Rajwar, where locals said the lack of clearance caused severe disruption to daily life.

In Kupwara district, residents in Watayin, Langate, and surrounding villages reported slippery and unsafe conditions on roads that remain uncleared. "Commuting has become dangerous, especially for



children and the elderly," said a villager from Langate.

The administration said it was prioritising interior and link roads in Budgam, including Khag, Khansahib, Pakherpora, and Yousmarg, but locals said many areas continue to face hardship.

Shopian, Anantnag, Bandipora's Dardpora area, and higher reaches of the Valley also witnessed similar problems.

"Snow clearance is slow, and essential services are badly affected. We urge the administration to act swiftly," said a resident of Dardpora in Bandipora district.

The locals criticised the government for failing to restore essential services, including power and water supply, in Rafiabad, Zaingare and surrounding areas even after nearly 24 hours.

They said main and interior roads connecting the constituency to district

and tehsil headquarters remain blocked, disrupting normal life, particularly affecting the movement of patients, elderly residents and emergency services.

Meanwhile, Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir, Anshul Garg said snow clearance work is underway across Kashmir, with about 75 per cent of roads cleared following recent heavy snowfall.

Garg said that out of nearly 20,000 kilometres of road length, around 15,000 kilometres have been cleared so far. He added that work on interior and link roads is in progress and is expected to be completed by Saturday evening.

The Div Com said a co-ordinated plan involving the Mechanical Engineering Department, Roads and Buildings Department, PMGSY and other agencies is being implemented to restore road connectivity across the Valley.

KPDCL Lineman Injured in Budgam

Observer News Service

BUDGAM: A power lineman was seriously injured after receiving an electric shock while carrying out repair work on an electricity transmission line in Batapora Kanihama area of Magam in central Kashmir's Budgam district on Saturday.

Officials said the injured lineman has been identified as Bashir Ahmad Dar. The incident occurred while repair work was underway to restore the disrupted power supply in the area. Dar sustained a severe electric shock and collapsed at

the site, following which he was rushed to Sub District Hospital Magam for immediate medical assistance.

Doctors at Magam hospital, after assessing his condition, referred him to a hospital in Srinagar as his condition was found to be critical. He was shifted in an ambulance for advanced treatment, officials said.

According to KNT, Police reached the hospital soon after the incident and have initiated an investigation to ascertain the exact circumstances that led to the accident. Statements of concerned staff and officials are being recorded as part of the probe.

It is pertinent to mention that power supply has been affected in several parts of the Kashmir Valley following recent heavy snowfall, which caused damage to transmission and distribution lines. Power department teams have been working continuously to restore electricity in affected areas amid harsh weather conditions.

Officials said repair works are being carried out at multiple locations across the Valley to normalize supply, adding that adverse weather and difficult terrain have increased risks for field staff during restoration operations.

Crime Branch EOW Jammu Registers 17 FIRs in Major Fraud Cases

Observer News Service

JAMMU: The Economic Offences Wing Jammu of Crime Branch Jammu and Kashmir has registered 17 FIRs in connection with multiple cases of fraud, cheating, impersonation, forgery and misuse of official position by government officials, officials said on Friday.

The FIRs were registered following written complaints received from various complainants. After a detailed assessment on factual as well as legal grounds, the allegations were found to disclose serious offences involving fraud, imperson-

ation, forgery, criminal conspiracy and abuse of official authority.

Officials said the complaints relate to a wide range of fraudulent activities, including irregular issuance of Permanent Resident Certificates, bank loan frauds through forged KYC documents, cheating of individuals by promising government jobs and issuance of fake appointment letters.

The cases also involve allegations of misuse of official position by public servants, tampering with public records, irregularities in revenue matters, illegal financial gains and threats extended

to complainants. Officials said the alleged acts resulted in wrongful losses to the government exchequer and financial institutions.

Senior Superintendent of Police Crime Branch EOW Jammu Mohd Fiesel Qureshi said the Crime Branch remains committed to safeguarding public trust and taking stringent action against those involved in economic offences.

He advised citizens to remain vigilant and promptly report cases of economic fraud and cheating to Crime Branch EOW Jammu so that timely legal action can be initiated.

Tourists Face Ordeal Amid Blocked Roads in Patnitop

Observer News Service

UDHAMPUR: Tourists visiting the popular hill resort of Patnitop faced severe inconvenience on Saturday following massive snowfall, with several roads blocked and vehicles trapped in deep snow, officials and locals said.

Heavy snowfall in the area led to accumulation of snow on roads, resulting in traffic coming to a complete standstill at multiple points. Several tourist vehicles were seen stuck in deep snow, leaving passengers stranded for hours amid freezing conditions.

Tourists alleged that snow clearance operations were either delayed or absent, worsening the situation on key stretches leading to and within Patnitop. Many visitors said they were forced to remain inside their vehicles as movement became impossible due to slippery and snowbound roads.

Officials said the sudden and intense snowfall caught both travellers and authorities off guard, while adverse weather conditions continued to hamper immediate clearance efforts. The lack of timely snow removal further aggravated difficulties for tourists unfamiliar with driving in such conditions.

According to KNT, the situation triggered frustration among stranded tourists, who urged authorities to expedite snow clearance and regulate vehicular movement during heavy snowfall to avoid such chaos.

Authorities said efforts are being made to deploy snow clearance machinery and restore road connectivity once weather conditions permit. Tourists have been advised to avoid unnecessary travel to snowbound areas and follow official advisories to ensure safety.

Snowfall Leaves Dozens of Budgam Villages Disconnected

Aala Bukhari

BUDGAM: Heavy snowfall in the upper reaches of Budgam district has left dozens of villages in central Kashmir disconnected, as several vital roads remain uncleared, causing severe hardship to residents.

Several villages in the Khan Sahib area of Budgam continue to remain cut off due to blocked roads, with locals struggling to access basic facilities. Residents have alleged that administrative negligence has forced them to live in isolation following the snowfall.

In many areas of Khan Sahib, including Faji Pora, Gati Pora, Bata Pora, Sheikhwadi Pora and adjoining localities, roads remain blocked, while electricity and water supply systems have completely collapsed.

Bashir Ahmad, a resident of Bonahama, Tehsil Beerwah said that the main road was cleared at midnight but it was done in haste and no proper clearance was done. The major portion of the



Ansar Hussain/KNO

road inside the village was not cleared at all, leaving most of the vehicles stuck, added another local.

Residents also said that there are expecting mothers in their village, raising serious concerns over emergency medical access. "We have been totally neglected by the administration. In case of an emergency, we have no option," another local resident added.

Tanveer Ahmad of Khagh, said the main road connecting dozens of villages has not

been cleared even after days of snowfall. He warned that the situation poses serious risks for pregnant women and critically ill patients, as there is no way to reach hospitals during emergencies.

Affected residents further alleged that departments such as Mechanical, Roads and Buildings (R&B), PMGSY and other concerned agencies have failed to reach the affected areas, indicating that the administration is non-functional at the ground level.

Locals have appealed to higher authorities for immediate intervention to clear roads, restore essential services and prevent further suffering.

Meanwhile, an official from the Roads and Buildings department Budgam said snow clearance machinery has been deployed across the district. "We are working to clear all roads," the official said, claiming that most of the main roads in the district have already been cleared of snow.

Tarigami Urges Govt to Assess Damage Caused by Strong Winds

SRINAGAR: CPI(M) leader and MLA Kulgam, Muhammad Yousuf Tarigami, on Saturday urged the government to immediately assess the damage caused to residential houses due to strong winds across Kashmir and compensate families who have suffered losses.

Tarigami said that strong gusts of wind, followed by snowfall in many parts of the Valley, damaged rooftops, power infrastructure and other structures, causing hardship to people, particularly in rural and far-off areas. He said a proper assessment of damage must be carried out on the ground so that affected households receive timely relief and compensation.

Tarigami said that snowfall is a blessing and is important from a larger environmental and agricultural perspective. However, he said that the government must ensure that basic services and connectivity are restored promptly so that people do not suffer during harsh winter conditions.

The road connectivity to several villages has been affected due to snowfall, leaving many interior and remote areas cut off. He urged the authorities to deploy adequate men and machinery to clear roads on priority and reconnect villages at the earliest, especially in hilly and far-flung areas where residents face severe difficulties.

He said that electricity supply was affected initially due to strong winds and later disrupted further due to snowfall. He said restoration of power supply is essential during winter and urged the concerned departments to ensure that electricity is restored at the earliest in all affected areas.

The government must respond swiftly and sensitively to the problems faced by people during winter and ensure that relief, restoration of services and connectivity are treated as priority issues to ease public hardship. (Observer News Service)

Sopore Police Solve Theft Case Within 24 Hours

SRINAGAR: Police in Sopore have solved a burglary case within 24 hours of its reporting, leading to the arrest of the accused and recovery of stolen property.

According to a statement issued to Kashmir Observer, police Station Sopore received a written complaint from Akash Ahmad Wani son of Hafeezullah Wani resident of Nowhamam, Sopore, stating that during the intervening night of 22/23 January 2026, unknown burglars broke open his shop located at Iqbal Market, Sopore, and stole crockery items etc. Accordingly, a case FIR No. 22/2026 under relevant sections of law was registered at Police Station Sopore, and investigation was initiated.

During the course of investigation, several suspects were examined and among them one suspect Danish Ahmad Gojri son of Mohammad Rajab Gojri resident of Badshah Masjid, Batpora, Sopore, confessed to his involvement in the burglary.

On his disclosure, Police recovered the stolen property worth lakhs of rupees from his possession. Subsequently, the accused has been arrested in the case. Further investigation is underway to ascertain any additional involvement or linkages.

Police reiterate their commitment to swift investigation, protection of property and commercial establishments and firm action against criminal elements, ensuring public confidence and safety. (Observer News Service)

Police Rescue Two Critical Patients in Khansahib

BUDGAM: Budgam Police carried out a swift and coordinated rescue operation, successfully evacuating two female patients in critical condition from remote areas of Khansahib and ensuring their immediate medical care. The operation was executed by Khansahib Police Station under the direct supervision of Station House Officer Zahoor Ahmad Khan.

According to officials, the police received urgent information regarding the deteriorating health condition of two women from Batpora Sheikhpura and Hariwanin areas of Khansahib. Given the seriousness of the situation and the logistical challenges posed by the terrain, a police team was promptly mobilized to assist the patients and their families.

Acting without delay, the police team reached both locations and facilitated the safe evacuation of the patients. The women were subsequently shifted to Sub District Hospital Khansahib, where doctors immediately admitted them for emergency medical treatment. Medical authorities at the hospital confirmed that timely transportation played a crucial role in stabilizing the patients.

Local inhabitants appreciated the prompt response of the police, stating that such interventions are vital in rural and far-flung areas where access to immediate medical facilities remains a challenge. The police action, they said, reflects a strong commitment to public welfare beyond routine law and order duties.

According to KNT, Budgam Police officials reiterated that assisting people during emergencies remains a top priority and urged locals to seek police help without hesitation in critical situations. The police department has consistently emphasized community-oriented policing to ensure safety, support, and rapid response across the district. (Observer News Service)

Slippery Gulmarg Road Triggers Massive Traffic Jam

BARAMULLA: Heavy slippery conditions on the Gulmarg road on Saturday led to long traffic jams, causing major inconvenience to commuters and tourists heading towards the famed ski resort, officials said.

Authorities said frosty and icy road conditions resulted in slow vehicular movement, with a gridlock witnessed at multiple points along the Gulmarg road. Several vehicles were seen without anti-skid chains, worsening the situation and contributing to traffic congestion.

Police personnel deployed on the route advised drivers to use anti-skid chains to ensure safe movement on the slippery stretch. Officials said vehicles not equipped with chains faced difficulty negotiating inclines, leading to frequent halts and disruption of traffic flow.

Despite the massive traffic jam and harsh road conditions, tourists were seen stepping out of their vehicles, clicking photographs, and enjoying the snow-covered landscape. Locals said the festive mood among tourists continued even as traffic remained stranded for long hours.

Tourism stakeholders said they are hopeful of a further surge in tourist arrivals once air traffic operations are fully normalized following recent weather disruptions. They said fresh snowfall has enhanced Gulmarg's appeal, which is expected to attract more visitors in the coming days.

According to KNT, authorities have urged travellers to follow traffic advisories, use anti-skid chains, and avoid unnecessary travel during peak hours to prevent further congestion and ensure safety on snowbound roads. (Observer News Service)

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That Old
Snow Spirit

After a long, dry wait, the valley is
white again, bringing delight, laughter,
and the old magic of snowball fights,
forts, and fearless winters back to life.

Ikkz Ikbai

This year, the snow arrived late, later than we expected.
The wait felt longer than any winter before. But
when the streets finally turned white, mountains lifted
themselves across the horizon, as if making their pres-
ence known.
The wind moved through the valley, carrying memories
that had been waiting for years.
This snow felt different. It was alive, full of meaning. It
reminded me that some winters are about remembering our-
selves, and moving through the world with wonder in every
step and glance.
When it began, I stood at the window, a warm cup of tea
pressed between my hands, and the memory appeared sudden-
ly, as if it had been waiting behind the glass all along: Sheen
Jung, the Snow Fight.
It was never a simple game. It was a season, a way of living,
a war we embraced without uniforms or orders, armed only with
courage, instinct, and laughter that could drown out any chill.



“Somewhere, a few children still throw snow-
balls and build forts, and in those moments, the old joy
returns, carrying every smile, fall, and laugh, as if it never left.

The moment the first snowball would hit the ground,
streets transformed naturally, alliances formed and shifted,
forts rose at street corners through hands that understood
strategy instinctively, and every movement carried the joy of
being alive together in a moment that belonged only to us.
Snow stung fingers and ears, noses turned bright red, and
bodies slipped repeatedly, but every fall became a reason to
laugh, and every mistake turned into a shared story that would
last forever.
Those friendships eventually stopped and shifted but never
broke, and the first snowball flew as a signal that the war
had begun, carrying with it a sound more thrilling than any
winter morning could hold.
When the snow slowed and fingers stiffened, an unspoken
promise held us together: tomorrow would come, and so would
the war again.
Inside, noon chai awaited, thick and steaming, filling
kitchens with a scent of warmth that brought life back to fro-
zen hands and reminded us that home always waited with love
and laughter.
Mothers pressed our hands, rubbed warmth into bodies
that had faced the cold, and in those moments, the world out-
side felt vast but safe, full of possibility and joy.
Today, snow still falls, but streets carry children whose
hands are busy with screens and eyes that watch rather than
leap into the air.
The forts, the laughter, the Snow War itself live now in mem-
ory, alive whenever the wind brushes gently against windows
and calls us back to moments that feel bigger than time itself.
Somewhere, a few children still throw snowballs and build
forts, and in those moments, the old joy returns, carrying every
smile, fall, and laugh, as if it never left.
The Snow War was our way of learning that courage, joy,
and friendship could be felt in the simplest acts, in the coldest
days, and that some games never end because they live forever
in memory and in the heart.

The author is an educator based in South Kashmir. He can
be reached at ikkzikibai@gmail.com.

Crisis in the Corridors

Overcrowded hospitals and unclear systems make emergencies
tense, demanding structured care and immediate action

Dr. Fiaz Maqbool Fazili

When sudden sickness strikes, families in
Kashmir enter emergency departments
hoping for timely, dependable care,
knowing every moment matters.
These moments expose the pressures on hospi-
tals and doctors and reveal the gaps in systems that
are supposed to protect lives.
Questions rise immediately in every emer-
gency: where will help arrive first, who will guide
treatment, and how will decisions happen when
time does not wait?
Recent tragic events in local hospitals make
these questions real for everyone, highlighting the
difference between care that responds effectively
and care that depends on chance.
Kashmir hospitals face overwhelming num-
bers of patients, with halls crowded beyond their
capacity and staff stretched across multiple roles
and responsibilities. Weak referral networks push
critical cases straight to tertiary centers, and social
factors funnel patients toward emergency rooms
with little preparation.

These pressures explain the intensity, but they
cannot excuse delays or variations in care.
Heart attacks, strokes, severe trauma, and sep-
sis demand immediate attention, and every minute
affects outcomes. Emergency care must remain
consistent, responsive, and effective regardless of
the number of patients.
Emergency medicine relies on structure as
much as skill.
Triage, clear protocols, step-by-step pathways,
and senior oversight combine to create a system
where care does not depend on luck or memory.
In many hospitals, triage is weak or superficial,
leaving patients treated in order of arrival while critical
symptoms go unrecognized. Junior doctors face
the burden of prioritizing care without guidance.
Triage that is conducted by trained person-
nel, with clear categories, rapid escalation of high-
acuity cases, and careful documentation, ensures
patients receive attention when it matters most and
provides support for doctors under pressure.
Protocols and algorithms prevent errors and stan-
dardize responses to emergencies. Delays in ECGs,
overlooked warning signs, treatments given without
diagnosis, and prolonged observation without action
all result from absent or inconsistent guidance.
Standard operating procedures for chest pain,
stroke, trauma, sepsis, and abdominal emergencies
ensure that doctors act decisively and safely, reduc-
ing variability while allowing judgment and experi-
ence to guide care.
Algorithms serve as support, helping teams
work effectively under pressure.
Junior doctors bring energy and commitment,
but complex emergencies require early senior in-
volvement. Structured escalation, shared respon-
sibility, and a culture that encourages consultation
protect patients and build learning.
Emergency medicine cannot rely on isolated



“When someone enters an emergency room at their most
vulnerable, the first impression must reflect competence, clarity,
and assurance. Standards, documentation, supervision, and organized
processes form the foundation of confidence, replacing anxiety with the
certainty that lives can be saved.

decisions, and supervision at every critical stage
strengthens outcomes while relieving pressure
from less experienced clinicians.
Time defines success in emergencies.
International benchmarks measure intervals
from door-to-doctor, doctor-to-decision, and deci-
sion-to-destination.
However, delays occur at every stage in Kash-
mir, with patients waiting for assessment, deci-
sions, or transfer.
Hospitals that implement clear, time-bound
care pathways can act promptly, even under con-
straints, ensuring that patients experience compe-
tent, reliable care.
Emergency response systems for cardiac arrest
or sudden collapse remain unclear in many hospi-
tals. Confusion arises about who should respond, how
alarms operate, and who leads the resuscitation.
Teams must train rigorously, alarms need to
work effectively, and post-event review should ex-
amine lessons for improvement.
Hospitals that systematize responses reduce
risk and save lives.
Learning from events strengthens the entire
system. Structured audits, morbidity and mortality
reviews, and feedback loops ensure that each emer-
gency becomes an opportunity for improvement

rather than repetition of avoidable mistakes.
Families sense unpredictability when care de-
pends on personal influence, staff presence, or ran-
dom chance.
Clear procedures, trained personnel, and ac-
countable leadership transform fear into confi-
dence, giving patients and their families certainty
when every second matters.
Restoring trust in emergency care calls for
strong commitment to structure, oversight, and
protocol-driven responses.
Hospitals must operate predictably, with staff
trained and systems clear, ensuring every patient
receives timely and effective care.
When someone enters an emergency room at
their most vulnerable, the first impression must re-
flect competence, clarity, and assurance.
Standards, documentation, supervision, and
organized processes form the foundation of con-
fidence, replacing anxiety with the certainty that
lives can be saved.

The author is a Srinagar-based healthcare
quality improvement specialist with expertise in
emergency medicine and hospital system reform.

Tumour Trouble in Paradise

A researcher describes how tumours and trauma now
touch everyday life in Kashmir’s hospitals and homes.

Dr. Umer Majeed Khaja

I have spent years studying cancer in
Kashmir through hospital records,
laboratory work, and patient data.
What I see every day confirms
what research has warned for a long time.
Cancer has spread across the valley,
reshaping families, straining communi-
ties, and pushing the healthcare system
to its limits.
Official data presented in Parlia-
ment indicate that Jammu and Kashmir
recorded approximately 14,112 new can-
cer cases in 2024, while the cumulative
burden between 2015 and 2024 reached
nearly 1.45 lakh cases.
These statistics translate to more
than 12,000 new diagnoses every year,
or roughly 30 to 40 people learning they
have cancer each day.
Hospitals and regional cancer reg-
istries confirm these trends, leaving no
room to treat this issue as anecdotal or
exaggerated.
Cancer in Kashmir shows clear pat-
terns shaped by geography, diet, occupa-
tional exposure, and lifestyle.
Among men, stomach cancer emerg-
es most frequently, followed by lung and
oesophageal cancers.
Breast cancer dominates among
women and increasingly affects younger
populations, diverging from traditional
patterns seen in previous decades.
Most diagnoses occur in individuals
above 45 years of age, with a significant
burden among those over 64, but the ris-
ing occurrence of colorectal and breast
cancers in younger patients signals
changes in biological and environmen-
tal factors.

Districts including Srinagar, Anant-
nag, Baramulla, Budgam, and Pulwama
account for a large proportion of these
cases, reflecting persistent trends across
the valley.
Rapid lifestyle transitions have am-
plified cancer risk.
Urbanisation, reduced physical ac-
tivity, and dietary changes contribute to
higher rates of obesity, central adiposity,
and metabolic syndrome. The traditional
Kashmiri diet, previously dominated by
home-cooked and plant-forward meals,
now increasingly features high-calorie,
high-fat processed foods, sweetened bev-
erages, and frequent consumption of red
and processed meats.
These changes trigger chronic in-
flammation, oxidative stress, and insu-
lin resistance, creating an environment
conducive to multiple cancers, including
colorectal, post-menopausal breast, en-
dometrial, pancreatic, and liver cancers.
Tobacco use compounds this risk,
particularly among men.
Cigarettes, hookah, and other forms
of tobacco strongly associate with can-
cers of the lung, bladder, upper aerodi-
gestive tract, and gastrointestinal sys-
tem, and they interact with poor diet and
air pollution to elevate risk further.
Environmental and occupational exposures
represent an additional layer of concern.
Pesticide and fungicide use in hor-
ticulture, particularly in apple-growing
districts, has increased over the past two
decades. Orchard workers face chronic
exposure to organophosphates and carba-
mates, which can damage DNA, disrupt
hormones, and produce oxidative stress.
Residues persist on fruits, in soil, and
in water, and when combined with air
pollution from traffic, biomass burning,



After years of
studying cancer in
Kashmir, I see how
lifestyle changes, diet,
environment, infections,
and gaps in healthcare
come together to shape
this disease. Every
patient, late diagnosis,
and rising case reflects
these interconnected
forces.

and localized industrial emissions, these
exposures likely contribute to rising lung
and upper gastrointestinal cancers.
Stomach cancer continues to do-
minate male diagnoses, drawing scientific
attention due to dietary and environ-
mental contributors.
High consumption of salted, dried,
pickled, and smoked foods generates car-
cinogenic compounds in the stomach,

while pesticide residues, heavy metals,
and prevalent Helicobacter pylori infec-
tions create sustained inflammatory en-
vironments that accelerate malignancy.
Infection, genetic predisposition,
and hormonal factors shape cancer pat-
terns further, particularly for breast and
infection-associated cancers, which re-
main significant due to limited vaccina-
tion, delayed treatment, and low screen-
ing coverage.
Changes in childbirth, pregnancy,
and breastfeeding, alongside obesity and
metabolic shifts, are increasing breast
cancer risk, with family patterns sug-
gesting genetic vulnerability.
A critical concern lies in late-
stage diagnosis.
Many patients reach hospitals with
stage III or IV cancers because aware-
ness remains low, stigma continues, and
specialised oncology care often lies far
from home.
Cancers that could be treated suc-
cessfully when found early become far
more dangerous when diagnosis comes
too late.
I see hospitals expanding diagnos-
tics and cancer registries, but patients
still face delays because outreach,
awareness, and local facilities remain
insufficient.
If we act with evidence, awareness,
and coordination, we can change the
course of cancer in the valley before it
defines the future.

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Chhus Bae Matric Pass Hassa

A song from the 1980s continues to resonate in Kashmir, reminding us that board exam marks never defined a person's worth, and social pride often obscured true skill.

Mushtaq Hurra

I can still hear it, faintly at first, as my father tuned the old radio in our living room. Subhan Showqeen's voice cut through the static and into our lives.

Chhus Bae Matric Pass Hassa was playing, and suddenly the entire neighbourhood seemed to hum the same tune.

The song became our shared language, a way of laughing at a social obsession that defined the valley's standards of academic success.

Households, street corners, and small gatherings all hummed those notes, mocking the pride of those who held their matriculation certificate as a crown.

It was playful, sharp, and impossible to ignore.

Back then, radio was our window to the world. It offered information, entertainment, and even a subtle way to challenge social norms.

When this song played, it tore apart the castles of pride built by matric passouts and their relatives. It reminded everyone that a certificate alone did not define a person.

Even decades later, as digital media floods every corner of our lives, the song refuses to fade.

YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram echo its tune, and even the younger generation finds something captivating in it.

The humour, the satire, and the sharp critique of social pretensions have survived the passage of time.

In the 1970s and 1980s, passing the matriculation examination was rare in the valley. Opportunities for study were scarce, especially in rural areas where children worked on farms, wove carpets, or helped with household chores.

Only a few pursued academics seriously. And clearing the exam was a milestone. But those who did were skilled, competent, and



capable of handling tasks from running government offices to teaching entire classes.

Our teachers, many of them matric passouts, carried knowledge and skill that went far beyond what the papers could measure.

Passing matric carried authority, respect, and a promise of achievement.

Marks and percentages were never part of the equation. A student either passed or failed. Failures were encouraged and guided to try again, rather than mocked or humiliated.

There was no unhealthy comparison between students, no glorification of one at the

expense of others. Success was celebrated, but never weaponized to make others feel small.

Today, the obsession with percentages dominates every debate and discussion. Parents, teachers, and social media combine to turn marks into trophies and children into competitors.

Viral posts about top scorers, including the recent example of Dr Shahid Iqbal Choudhary's class 10 results, stir admiration for a few while silently discouraging many others.

The obsession with numerical success has created anxiety, stress, and a false yardstick

for worth.

History shows that marks rarely capture true talent.

Edison struggled in school, Faraday had minimal formal education, Franklin, Joule, and countless others achieved greatness outside classrooms. Many billionaires, inventors, and athletes left school early, but still reshaped the world.

Board exams, certificates, and percentages are snapshots instead of measures of ambition, skill, or character.

That iconic Kashmiri song reminds us that



CHHUS BAE MATRIC PASS HASSA HAS LASTED BECAUSE IT SPEAKS TO THE HUMAN

experience across generations. It inspires laughter, reflection, and humility while exposing the gap between social pretension and real ability. It reminds parents, teachers, and society that education and achievement go far beyond the numbers on a piece of paper.

Life cannot be measured in numbers alone. It warns against valuing pride over competence, public acclaim over personal growth, and social validation over true achievement.

Chhus Bae Matric Pass Hassa has lasted because it speaks to the human experience across generations.

It inspires laughter, reflection, and humility while exposing the gap between social pretension and real ability. It reminds parents, teachers, and society that education and achievement go far beyond the numbers on a piece of paper.

Even in a digital age, its satire carries a timeless message: competence, skill, and curiosity matter far more than social bragging or numerical superiority.

Life continues beyond the classroom, and the song remains an anthem for those who believe that worth cannot be counted.

—The author is an educator from Bandipora. He can be reached at mushtaqhurra143@gmail.com.

The Career We Never Choose

Classrooms teach children the words society wants to hear. I still hear my own childhood speaking back, and it aches to remember the life I never lived.

Ifrah Mushtaq

“I want to be a doctor because I want to serve poor people.”

These words have followed me through every year of my life, living in school notebooks and examination halls, written in the careful handwriting of children who have yet to face hardship and discover what it truly means to serve.

Teachers smile at them, examiners reward them, and society nods, as if these words carry meaning on their own.

Each time I hear them, expectation presses down, because these words come from repetition rather than thought.

When I was in class six, I was asked what I wanted to become. I was reading about Kalpana Chawla, and for a while I wanted to be an astronaut.

I loved the idea that a human mind could leave the earth and look back at the world from above, free and unbound.

But when the exam paper lay in front of me, I did not write that. I wrote what would be accepted.

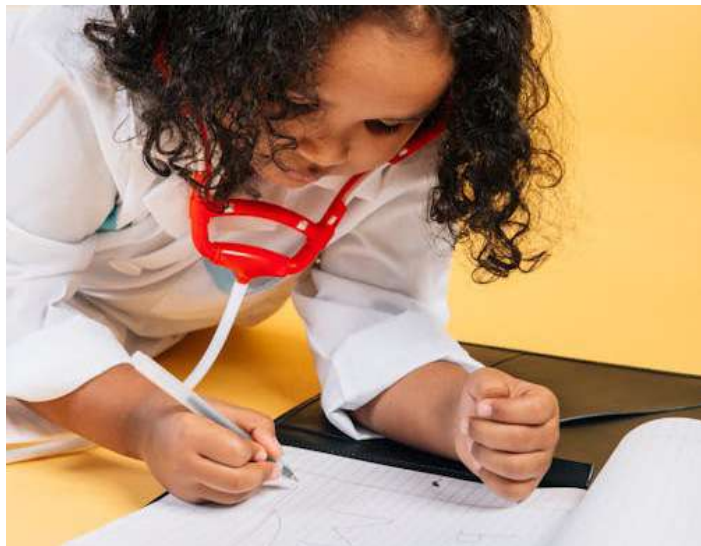
I wrote that I wanted to be a doctor because I wanted to serve poor people. The words were neat, and they earned me good marks.

But no one asked whether this was the life I truly wished for, and nobody bothered to ask what I felt inside.

Classrooms do not ask who we are. They ask how well we can repeat what we have been told.

They reward compliance, decorate answers, and shape children to fit patterns: meet expectations and perform correctly.

A child learns early that there is an “approved answer” and a “right



one.”

The approved answer brings praise, grades, and approval. The right one waits in the shadows, unspoken.

We teach children to wear masks and then applaud how well they fit.

Becoming a doctor or an engineer holds honour, and it should, while we speak little of becoming a writer, a thinker, a teacher, a philosopher, or a person who questions everything.

We create boxes for children and feel uneasy when one refuses to fit. Slowly, with care and consequence, we guide them to bend.

Many of these children grow into adults who adjust, work, and build lives. They carry themselves well, while the possibilities of who they could have been remain in memory.

A child who wants to write learns to heal, and a child who wants to explore learns to sit still. When they perform this beautifully, the world applauds.

Perhaps this is why so many adults feel a hollowness inside. They spent their childhood becoming someone they were never asked if they wished to become.

Today, a decade later, I walk past playgrounds, schools, and examination halls, and the voices have not changed. I hear children chanting, “I want to be a doctor because I want to serve poor people,” and I hear my own childhood speaking back.

I hear the words I once wrote because they were approved, and rewarded.

I wonder how many will carry this sentence like a song they never chose, and how many will live a life shaped by expectation rather than desire.

I wonder if anyone will ever ask them what they truly feel.

—The author is an English Literature Student. She can be reached at ifrahm.literaryworks@gmail.com.

‘Khokh’ in the House

An old household warning carries centuries of raids, fear, and memory into everyday speech.

Dr. Harjeet Singh

Evenings in older Kashmiri homes grew tense as daylight faded.

Lamps glowed, elders settled into their seats, and children, freed from rules, tested their limits with noise and movement, seeing how far they could go before order returned.

When nothing else worked, a single phrase swept across the room: “Hush now, behave, or Khokh will take you away.”

The words came without explanation, but they carried a power older than the house itself.

History did not stay in books. It lived in daily routines, in phrases spoken without thought, and in habits that lasted because they worked.

What happened in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries did not disappear. It stayed in memory and crept into ordinary speech, carrying a weight that ran deep even when unnoticed.

Memory passed down through repetition rather than instruction. Stories moved from mouth to mouth, names carried meaning beyond their definitions, and language absorbed experience like soil absorbs rain.

Over time, real encounters with danger turned into symbols. Details faded, but the feeling remained.

Life during those centuries unfolded under Afghan and Sikh rule, layered over older systems that never fully disappeared.

Authority shifted often, control was uncertain, and survival meant learning to read danger early.

Trade routes mattered, and moving from place to place carried risk.

Beyond settled towns, the terrain resisted control, and local forces moved in where the state could not.

Some tribal communities in the Lower Jhelum Valley and southern regions built reputations shaped by conflict and fear.

Raids disrupted trade, travelers learned caution, and settled populations carried a constant awareness of vulnerability.

These encounters left marks that official records could not capture.

Among these groups were the Kakha, known in common speech as Khakha or Khokha, living along the Jhelum River near the Hazara region during Afghan rule from 1752 to 1819 and Sikh rule from 1819 to 1846. Authorities called them rebellious



THE KHOKH BELONGS TO BOTH. SCHOLARS TRACE ITS ORIGINS THROUGH AFGHAN AND SIKH RECORDS, river valleys, and contested terrain. Families continue to speak the name without thinking of its past, keeping its power alive simply through use.

and dangerous, and stories of their raids followed their name.

Over time, the name gained power that no longer depended on history.

Memory turned the Khokha into something bigger than fact. Places and politics blurred. What remained was feeling.

Fear attached to the sound, and authority followed naturally.

The Khokha became a figure that needed no explanation, a presence summoned by speech alone.

Inside homes, this transformation found a purpose. Elders learned that saying Khokh restored order instantly. Children did not need stories or lessons. The word carried conse-

quence, and its sound pressed obedience into the room.

Many grew up knowing this power instinctively.

Grandparents spoke the name with certainty. Parents repeated it because it worked. Children felt its force before they even understood it. History entered their lives through tone and timing.

This shows how fear shaped by past violence passes across generations without deliberate effort.

A name once tied to real danger became a tool of discipline in family life. What survived was not detail but impact, preserved through habit rather than formal memory.

Here, history and folklore meet. The Khokh belongs to both. Scholars trace its origins through Afghan and Sikh records, river valleys, and contested terrain. Families continue to speak the name without thinking of its past, keeping its power alive simply through use.

Language makes this survival possible. Words carry experience and emotional weight long after events pass.

When a word continues to demand attention, it stays alive in daily life.

—The author is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Education at Akal University, Bathinda, Punjab. He can be reached at aishxing@gmail.com.



I WONDER HOW MANY WILL CARRY THIS SENTENCE like a song they never chose, and how many will live a life shaped by expectation rather than desire.

How Your Body Clock Shapes Brain Health in Later Life

Eef Hogervorst | The Conversation

London- Inside the body, a 24-hour rhythm, known as the circadian rhythm, quietly coordinates when we sleep, wake, eat and recover. This internal timing system helps keep organs and hormones working in sync. When it becomes disrupted, the effects may extend well beyond poor sleep, with growing evidence suggesting consequences for long-term brain health.

A large 2025 study of more than 2,000 people with an average age of 79 found that those with a strong circadian rhythm had an almost halved risk of developing dementia. Circadian rhythms regulate daily processes including sleep timing, hormone release, heart rate and body temperature.

Over three years of follow-up, dementia developed in 7% of participants with irregular body clocks, measured using heart rate monitors, compared with 10% of those whose rhythms remained more regular.

Disrupted circadian rhythms are often associated with poor sleep. For decades, poor sleep has been suspected to contribute to both dementia and heart disease, which share several underlying risk factors.

In the 2025 study, worse heart health and high blood pressure, both commonly linked to sleep disruption, were accounted for in the analysis. Sleep apnoea, however, was not.

Sleep apnoea is a common condition in which breathing repeatedly stops and starts during sleep, reducing oxygen supply to the brain and raising blood pressure.

Its relationship with dementia remains debated, largely because sleep apnoea is more common in people who already have established dementia risk factors such as obesity, diabetes, smoking and alcohol misuse.

This overlap makes it difficult to determine whether sleep apnoea itself increases dementia risk or whether it reflects broader metabolic and cardiovascular vulnerability.

This review suggested that addressing physical inactivity linked to fatigue from disrupted sleep may be a promising approach. Increasing activity could reduce



obesity, improve sleep quality and support brain cell health, potentially lowering dementia risk through several pathways at once.

Other explanations may also help clarify the link between disrupted circadian rhythms and dementia. One involves the immune system, which is influenced by circadian rhythms as well as sleep and plays a role in both heart disease and neurodegeneration.

Another is the theory that sleep supports the removal of toxic proteins from the brain, including amyloid plaques that characterise Alzheimer's disease, through a waste clearance system that appears to be more active during sleep.

While this clearance hypothesis is widely discussed, evidence remains mixed. Some animal studies, including those in mice, have shown reduced rather than increased toxin clearance during sleep. Animal findings must be interpreted cautiously, as sleep patterns in mice differ substantially from those in humans, particularly in later life.

The Lancet commission update on dementia prevention concluded that sleeping for longer or shorter durations is unlikely to be a true independent risk factor for dementia.

One reason for this conclusion is that evidence from real-world sleep disruption

does not clearly point to sleep duration as the main driver of risk.

Although shift work is associated with increased dementia risks, studies do not consistently show higher risk in night shift workers compared with day shift workers. If sleep disruption alone were responsible, night shifts would be expected to carry a greater risk.

This suggests that circadian disruption may matter independently of sleep duration. However, shift work is also associated with unhealthy lifestyle patterns, including poorer diet, smoking, alcohol use and variable physical activity.

Chronic stress, lack of routine, hormonal disruption, raised blood pressure, reduced opportunities for leisure and social isolation also cluster around shift work. Each of these factors is independently linked to dementia, heart disease and poor sleep, complicating attempts to isolate the effects of circadian disruption alone.

The Lancet authors also argued that if amyloid clearance does occur in humans, it likely happens during the first two hours of sleep, when deep sleep is most prominent.

Deep sleep tends to be preserved even when total sleep duration falls below seven hours. They therefore suggested that

fragmented sleep and disrupted biological rhythms may be early consequences of dementia-related brain changes, rather than causes.

The toxic plaques may accumulate in brain regions that regulate sleep and wakefulness long before memory problems become apparent.

So should sleep be deprioritised in dementia prevention? The Lancet advice was not to restrict sleep. Evidence linking long sleep, defined as more than eight hours, to dementia risk was not supported when broader data were considered.

A recent trial tested a personalised programme combining several approaches, such as light exposure, sleep scheduling, daytime activity and caregiver support, to improve sleep in people with dementia.

After eight months, sleep improved in the intervention group, although sleep also improved with usual care. The overall effect was small to moderate, and there was no improvement in dementia-related behaviours or overall health.

These approaches may benefit carers by supporting routines, but their impact for people with dementia appears limited.

Both acute and chronic sleep deprivation, particularly loss of deep sleep and REM sleep, can impair memory. Whether long-term disruption of restorative sleep increases dementia risk later in life, and whether treating sleep problems can prevent dementia, remains uncertain.

Because improving sleep is often seen as a potential prevention strategy, medications used to treat insomnia also deserve scrutiny. Sedative drugs such as benzodiazepines have been linked to increased dementia risk, as well as daytime drowsiness, falls and accidents.

Melatonin, while used by many, has not shown consistent benefits for improving sleep in adults.

That said, there are evidence-based ways to improve sleep and support healthy circadian rhythms. Regular moderate exercise, around 30 minutes a day, particularly outdoors and before midday, is one of the most effective. As a bonus, physical activity is also one of the strongest protective factors against heart disease and dementia. So wrap up warm and get walking.

Study Points To Oestrogen-linked Pathway For Greater Gut Sensitivity In Women

Press Trust of India

A new study into why women experience more severe gut pain suggests that oestrogen, the female sexual hormone, increases the release of a gut hormone that promotes satiety, boosting serotonin production, and sensitising nerves in the gut that trigger pain response.

A comparative study of male and female mouse models conducted by researchers from South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute and University of California,

tor of the visceral pain research group at South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute, said.

Gastrointestinal and visceral pain disorders are more common among women, but its reasons remain poorly understood, the researchers said.

The study has also revealed that oestrogen increases the gut's response to short-chain fatty acids -- produced when bacteria break down food -- possibly explaining why dietary interventions like low FODMAP



San Francisco, revealed an oestrogen-dependent pathway that promotes gut sensitivity to toxic stimuli, according to the findings published in the 'Science' journal.

"Oestrogen activates a pathway in the colon that increases the release of the gut hormone PYY. PYY then stimulates neighbouring serotonin-producing enterochromaffin cells, boosting serotonin output and sensitising the nerves that send pain messages to the brain," Stuart Brierley, direc-

diets can reduce symptoms of gastrointestinal distress in some people.

A FODMAP diet restricts the intake of short-chain carbohydrates, common in foods such as garlic, apples, wheat and dairy.

"We now understand that certain foods can feed into this oestrogen-sensitive pathway through the metabolites they produce. This gives us a clearer biological rationale for why dietary changes may help and how they could be refined," Brierley said.

AI Not Just About Creating Content, It Can Predict Road Crashes Too!

By Barun Jha

Artificial Intelligence is not just about creating text, images, graphics and videos online; it can make a big change in the physical life and for humanity by even predicting road crashes.

The assertion was made by SaveLife Foundation Founder and CEO Piyush Tewari here during the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting.

Tewari, who ventured into the area of working on road safety after losing a young family member in a road crash, said his organisation is looking at using AI in a big way for predictive analysis.

He also lauded the Government of India for a big push around AI in road safety.

Union Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari recently announced an initiative where AI is going to be used to interpret the road crash data that is coming out and provide faster insights.

"Can we predict road crashes by bringing some data points together? So, there's definitely a huge amount of application, and the signs are very much positive.

"At SaveLife, we have used AI for the last 7-8 years. We've trained cameras using AI, fixed with drones to preemptively identify parked vehicles on highways, for example, because rear-end collisions are a big issue when it comes to road safety.

"Similarly, we have used AI-trained cameras on intersections to identify conflicts and to create a heatmap of such intersections. We've defined conflicts on the basis of proximity, etc.," he said.

Tewari, who is participating in AI and social innovation sessions at WEF, said there's a significant amount of application of AI in this whole space of road safety.

"I hope to be contributing with regard to our experience of using it in India at a very, very grassroots level," he said.

"AI has the ability to transform lives. The decisions and the thought process that might take months sometimes can be done in hours or minutes using AI. We have to make AI more accessible to the public, and the Government of India's mission is also to make it more accessible.

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Dated: 24/01/2026

ADVISORY FOR ORCHARDISTS

In view of recent rain/snow, orchardists are advised to adhere to the following advisory to minimise loss/damage to the orchards.

1. Clear water channels and drains to ensure complete drainage from the orchards/nurseries.

2. Shake trees to remove snow immediately from their branches after snowfall.

3. Provide support/staking to trees/limbs which are not strong enough to stand without support.

4. Stake newly planted trees to prevent any damage as the newly planted trees take a couple of years to anchor firmly in the soil.

5. If the fruit trees tilt, reduce the canopy load by pruning, and provide proper support.

6. If the trees get partially uprooted, slowly pull back the trees to the original position after heavy pruning and provide proper support/staking to the main trunk to prevent further fall.

7. If the main trunk splits into or any scaffold branch breaks and bark is intact, after heavy pruning, bring the branch to the original position by tying with a rope and/or bolting or using iron nails. Ensure that the union remains tight and apply Bordeaux/ Chaubatia paste on the cut surface.

8. If roots become exposed/naked, immediately mulch your trees to ensure their roots are insulated from winter cold.

9. In case of High-density Orchards, ensure that the Anti-hail net is folded back tight. Ensure the installation of Cross wires in the trellis structure so that in case of strong winds/ heavy snow the trellis is not damaged or dislodged

10. For protected structures (Greenhouses/Polyhouses), carefully remove the snow to avoid damage to the structures.

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Mahindra Launches Thar Roxx Star Edition With Premium Styling

Mohammed Mudassir

SRINAGAR- Mahindra & Mahindra has expanded its popular lifestyle SUV lineup with the launch of the 2026 Mahindra Thar Roxx Star Edition, a special edition of the well-liked Thar Roxx that focuses on styling and premium comfort, while keeping the core performance and capability intact. The new edition was introduced in the Indian market with prices starting at ₹16.85 lakh (ex-showroom) for the diesel manual variant and goes up to ₹18.35 lakh (ex-showroom) for the diesel automatic version, making it an attractive option in the premium rear-wheel-drive SUV segment.

Exterior: Striking Visual Upgrades

The Thar Roxx Star Edition stands out primarily for its aesthetic enhancements. It features a piano black front grille and matching 19-inch piano black alloy wheels that lend the SUV a distinctive and more sophisticated presence on the road. A new Citrine Yellow exterior colour has been introduced as the hero shade, along with existing options such as Tango Red, Everest White, and Stealth Black, giving buyers a range of bold looks to choose from.

To further distinguish it from the standard model, Mahindra has added a special "Star Edition" badge on the C-pillar — a small but effective touch that denotes its exclusive status within the Thar Roxx lineup.

Interior: Premium Look and Comfort

Inside, the Star Edition con-



tinues its premium theme with all-black leatherette upholstery featuring suede accents, giving the cabin a more upscale, sportier character compared to the standard Roxx variants. Comfortable features such as front ventilated seats, a sliding armrest, and 60:40 split rear seats with multipoint recline enhance everyday usability and passenger comfort.

Tech and Convenience Highlights

The new edition is packed with modern technology and convenience features, appealing to buyers who want both style and substance:

- ▶ 10.2-inch HD touchscreen infotainment system
- ▶ Fully digital instrument cluster
- ▶ Adrenox connected car technology with Alexa integration
- ▶ Wireless Android Auto and Apple CarPlay
- ▶ Nine-speaker Harman Kardon premium audio system
- ▶ Panoramic sunroof
- ▶ Surround-view camera system
- ▶ Electric folding ORVMs
- ▶ Dual-zone automatic climate control

Why Lowering Tyre Pressure in Winter Is Crucial for Kashmir's Roads

Mohammed Mudassir

SRINAGAR- As winter tightens its grip over Kashmir, drivers and riders must adjust their vehicles for cold-weather conditions. One of the most overlooked yet critical steps is checking and correcting tyre pressure. Cold temperatures cause air to contract, leading to lower tyre pressure, which directly affects grip, braking, ride comfort, and safety on icy or wet roads common across the Valley.

How Cold Weather Affects Tyres

In winter, tyre pressure can drop by 1–2 PSI for every 10°C fall in temperature. Under-inflated tyres reduce the contact patch efficiency, increase stopping distances, and can compromise handling—especially dangerous on snow-dusted city roads and mountain passes around Srinagar.

Two-Wheelers: Recommended Adjustment

For motorcycles and scooter-ers, riders should typically reduce tyre pressure by 2–3 PSI from summer settings, depending on road conditions. This slightly softer setup improves traction and stability on cold, slippery surfaces without risk-



ing tyre damage. Always adjust when tyres are cold, ideally in the morning.

Four-Wheelers: Recommended Adjustment

For cars and SUVs, experts advise lowering tyre pressure by 2–4 PSI during peak winter months. This helps maintain a better grip and ride quality on uneven, cold roads. However, avoid excessive deflation as going too low increases tyre wear and fuel consumption.

Balance Safety with Manufacturer Guidelines

Always cross-check your vehicle's recommended tyre pressure listed on the door jamb or owner's manual. The goal is to compensate for cold air contraction, not to underinflate beyond safe limits.

AI To Operate New Dreamliner With Limitations; Awaits Certain FAA Approvals

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI- Air India will operate its new Boeing 787-9 aircraft with certain limitations as the Tata Group-owned airline is awaiting approvals from the US watchdog FAA for the sliding privacy doors in the plane's business class suites and for 18 economy class seats, sources said.

The aircraft, also the first custom-made Dreamliner to join the Air India fleet after takeover by the Tata Group in January 2022, will enter commercial operations on the Mumbai-Frankfurt route from February 1.

The plane has 296 seats, comprising 30 business class, 28 premium economy and 238 economy class seats. Out of them, 18 economy class seats will not be available for use till the FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) give its approval, the sources told PTI.

In a statement to PTI, an airline spokesperson said the new B787-9 will enter commercial operations on February 1 with certain limitations.

"The sliding privacy doors in our business class suites will remain securely fixed in the open position and unavailable for passenger use, as this specific seat feature awaits regulatory approval. We expect to receive the necessary approval in the near future. All other seat features are



available for passenger use," the spokesperson said.

Separately, a total of 18 specific economy class seats are blocked from sale and are also physically blocked from use.

"The seat product itself (RECARO 3710) is fully certified and in regular operation on many airlines worldwide; however, there is a regulatory interpretation affecting the 18 specific seats that we are working with the manufacturer and regulator to resolve.

"The 18 specific seats will only be offered for sale once full certification is received," the spokesperson said.

When contacted over email, an FAA spokesperson told PTI, "We don't comment on ongoing certification work". There was no comment from Boeing.

In 2026, five more wide-body aircraft -- three Boeing 787-9s and 2 A350-1000s -- are set to join the Air India fleet. The airline, currently, has 188 planes, and the legacy Boeing 787s are undergoing

etrofit progressively.

According to the spokesperson, the product limitations due to pending certification apply only to the new B787-9 aircraft, and not to the retrofitted B787-8 planes.

These are two different variants, and their interior fitout undergoes a separate certification process. The certifications for seats and features on the B787-8 are complete and have been approved by relevant regulators and will be available for customer use, the spokesperson added.

The sources also said that some global airlines are awaiting certain regulatory approvals for their business class seats. These include Lufthansa, which is awaiting regulatory certification nod for some of the business class seats in their new Boeing 787-9 aircraft, they added.

At present, Air India has 33 Boeing 787s -- 26 legacy Boeing 787-8s and 7 Boeing 787-9s, including 6 from Vistara and the new one.

Indigo Vacated 717 Slots At Domestic Airports After DGCA Curtailed Winter Flights

Press Trust of India

MUMBAI- IndiGo has vacated more than 700 slots at various domestic airports, following aviation watchdog DGCA curtailing the country's largest airline's winter flights by 10 per cent after massive operational disruptions in early December, according to sources.

Generally, slots refer to a particular time period given to an airline for takeoff and landing of aircraft. In simple terms, it is about operating flights at the given time.

Out of the 717 slots, as many as 364 are from six key metro airports -- Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bengaluru and Hyderabad. Among these cities, most of the vacated slots are from Hyderabad and Bengaluru, the sources told PTI.

As per data provided by the sources, the number of slots vacated by IndiGo is spread over the January-March period. A total of 361 slots have been vacated for March compared to just 43 for February, and this month, the count of vacated slots is at 361.

Against this backdrop, the civil aviation ministry on Thursday asked other airlines to submit their requests for



operating domestic flights on the slots vacated by IndiGo.

"IndiGo has submitted a list of 717 slots to the ministry, which it has vacated after the domestic winter schedule was reduced by 10 per cent in early December last year," one of the sources said.

The airline, which generally operates more than 2,200 flights daily, has trimmed the number of services following the directive from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) that was aimed at preventing last-minute cancellations and ensuring operational stability.

As part of its winter schedule for 2025-26, IndiGo was allowed to operate 15,014 flights per week, which comes to 2,144 flights per day.

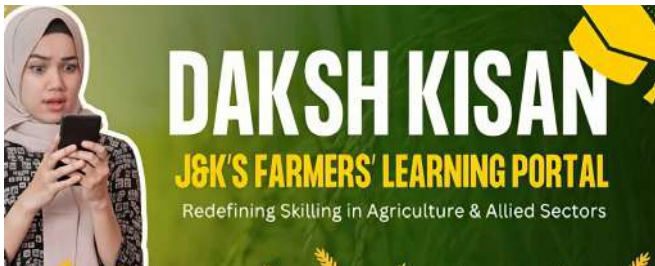
A 10 per cent reduction has brought this down to 1,930 domestic flights per day. It

may be noted here that IndiGo, in its summer schedule, operated on an average of 2,022 flights a day.

Between December 3 and 5 last year, IndiGo cancelled 2,507 flights and 1,852 flights were delayed, impacting over 3 lakh passengers at airports across the country.

Following the massive disruptions, DGCA reduced IndiGo's winter schedule by 10 per cent, which meant the airline had stopped operating services in various slots.

"Going by the slots vacated by IndiGo, it is clear that they can be operated by other airlines only till the end of March. After that, they might go back to IndiGo. No one can do the network planning at such short notice. No one is going to open a sector at such short notice, operate it only to close after a month," an airline industry executive said.



Daksh Kisan: Transforming Smartphones Into Classrooms For Farmers

171 courses, 3.47 lakh registrations, 4.15 lakh enrolments reflect the platform's strong impact on ground

Observer News Service

JAMMU- In 2023, smartphone penetration among farmers in Jammu & Kashmir crossed more than 70 per cent, as was learned during a survey conducted under the dedicated farmer outreach campaign Kisan Sampark Abhiyan. While the digital shift was clearly visible, its potential remained largely untapped.

Recognising this opportunity, the J&K Administration took a forward-looking decision to reposition the smartphone from being merely a communication device to a powerful instrument of learning for the farming community. This vision culminated in the creation of Daksh Kisan, a Learning Management System (LMS) that today stands as the first initiative of its kind in India, and possibly in Asia, dedicated to the knowledge upgradation of farmers.

Launched amid cautious expectations, Daksh Kisan has, within just two years, emerged as one of the most successful digital capacity-building platforms for farmers in the

country. The initiative marked a significant departure from conventional extension approaches by embedding structured, measurable learning into a digital ecosystem tailored specifically for farmers.

The conceptual foundation of Daksh Kisan rested on a simple yet powerful insight that if farmers are already digitally connected, learning must follow the same path. With smartphones becoming commonplace even in remote villages, the Agriculture Production Department, in collaboration with the two agricultural universities—SKUAST-Jammu and SKUAST-Kashmir—designed an LMS keeping usability, low-bandwidth access, language diversity and local relevance at its core.

A defining feature of the platform is its agro-climatic customisation. Courses are curated according to specific agro-climatic zones, ensuring that knowledge disseminated is not generic but tailored to local crops, soil conditions and weather patterns, ranging from temperate orchard systems to subtropical agricultural plains.

JKEDI Concludes Two MDPs Under RAMP At Tral

Observer News Service

PULWAMA- Jammu & Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI), Pulwama successfully concluded two batches of Management Development Programmes (MDPs) under the RAMP initiative at the NRLM Centre, Tral.

The programmes witnessed the participation of 42 female

entrepreneurs, who were encouraged them to effectively utilize the knowledge gained for establishing sustainable and growth-oriented enterprises.

Raiyees Manzoor, District Nodal Officer, JKEDI Pulwama, was also present on the occasion. He highlighted the significance of such capacity-building initiatives in promoting entrepreneurship and empowering women at the grassroots level,



entrepreneurs, who were imparted structured training to enhance their entrepreneurial skills and strengthen their business capabilities.

The valedictory ceremony was attended by Nafia Nazir, Range Officer, South Kashmir, who also served as the reviewer of the programmes. While interacting with the participants, she lauded their active involvement and enthusiasm, and en-

particularly in rural and semi-urban areas.

The JKEDI course team was present during the valedictory function and provided continuous academic and mentoring support throughout the training period. The participants expressed their gratitude to the course team and JKEDI for their guidance, support, and efforts in organizing the programmes successfully.

8 Steps To Successfully File A Bike Insurance Claim After An Accident

Observer News Desk

SRINAGAR- Accidents are stressful. In that moment, paperwork and insurance are often the last things on your mind. However, knowing how to file a bike insurance claim can save you time, money, and unnecessary worry. A clear claim process helps protect you financially, reduces confusion, and ensures your bike is repaired faster. Understanding the steps in advance allows you to act confidently when it matters most.

Step-by-Step Guide to Filing a Bike Insurance Claim Online

Here's a step-by-step guide to filing your bike insurance claim online:

1. Ensure Safety and Assess the Situation

Your safety always comes first. Before thinking about insurance, take a moment to check yourself and others for injuries. Even minor accidents can cause shock, so stay calm.

If it is safe to do so, move your bike to the side of the road to avoid blocking traffic. Switch off your bike's engine and activate the hazard lights, if present. If

you or anyone else is injured, call for medical assistance immediately. Roadside assistance can also be contacted if the bike cannot be moved.

2. Inform the Police (If Required)

Not every accident requires a police report, but some situations do. An FIR is mandatory in cases involving theft, third-party injury, death, or major damage to property. It may also be required if there is a legal dispute or unclear liability.

For minor accidents with no third-party involvement, insurers may not ask for an FIR. However, it is always safer to check with your insurance provider. A police report helps establish facts and supports your claim if questions arise later.

3. Inform Your Insurance Provider Immediately

Once the situation is under control, notify your insurer promptly. Delays can complicate the bike accident claim process or even result in rejection, as most companies have strict time limits for claim intimation.

You can register your two-wheeler insurance online



through the insurer's mobile app or official website, or contact customer support via the helpline. Keep essential details ready, such as your policy number, the date and time of the accident, the location, and a brief description of the incident.

After the bike accident insurance claim is registered, you will receive a claim reference number.

4. Document the Damage

Proper documentation plays a key role in claim approval. Use your phone to take clear photos and videos of the damage from different angles. Make sure the bike number plate is visible in at least one image.

Capture close-ups of damaged parts, the accident loca-

tion, and any other vehicles involved. If possible, take photos before moving the bike. These visuals help the insurer assess the extent of damage and speed up inspection.

5. Understand Your Coverage Before Filing the Claim

Before submitting the claim form, it is important to understand what your policy covers. If you have comprehensive bike insurance, it generally includes both own-damage and third-party cover, subject to the policy terms and conditions.

Being clear about inclusions, exclusions, and deductibles helps set realistic expectations during the claim process. It also reduces the risk of disputes or

delays during damage assessment and settlement.

6. File the Claim Form

Next, you need to submit the claim form. This can be completed either online or offline, depending on your insurer's procedure. Filing the claim online is quicker and allows you to track its progress more easily.

The form requires details such as policy information, accident description, and repair preferences. Ensure all information is accurate and consistent with earlier communication.

You will generally need the following documents:

- Bike insurance policy document
- Copy of the Registration Certificate (RC)
- The driving licence of the rider at the time of the accident
- FIR copy, if applicable
- Repair estimates and final invoices

Submitting complete documents helps avoid delays.

7. Survey and Inspection

After you file the claim, the insurer will appoint a surveyor to inspect the bike. The surveyor's role is to assess the damage and verify whether it matches the claim details.

Do not start repairs before the inspection unless the insurer gives written approval. During inspection, cooperate fully and provide any additional information requested. The surveyor may take photographs and prepare a report for claim approval.

8. Bike Repairs and Claim Settlement

Once the inspection is done, repairs can begin. If you choose a network garage, you may be eligible for a cashless claim. In this case, the insurer pays the garage directly, and you only pay the non-covered amount.

If you select a non-network garage, you will need to pay the repair cost first and then apply for reimbursement. Submit final bills, receipts, and repair reports to the insurer. After verification, the claim amount is settled in accordance with the policy terms.

5 Common Mistakes to Avoid While Filing a Bike Insurance Claim

Many claims are delayed or rejected due to simple errors. Being aware of these can save you time and trouble.

- Delaying claim intimation beyond the allowed timeframe
- Repairing the bike before the surveyor completes the inspection
- Submitting incomplete or incorrect documents
- Failing to understand policy coverage, exclusions, or deductibles before filing the claim
- Providing inconsistent or unclear accident details

Following the correct steps reduces the risk of complications.

After an accident, submitting a bike insurance claim can be simple if you act promptly. Keeping detailed records of the damage, providing the required documents, and following your insurer's instructions ensure a seamless claim process.

Timely communication helps speed up approval and settlement. Understanding the procedure allows you to handle the claim confidently and get back on the road without stress.

Disclaimer: The above press release comes to you under an arrangement and Kashmir Observer takes no editorial responsibility for the same.).

R-DAY PARADE

MHA Tableau to Showcase Transition to 'Faster, Tech-driven Justice System'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi: The Union home ministry will showcase the country's "boldest criminal law overhaul" in a century, adopting a faster, tech-driven and citizen-centric justice system, in its tableau on 77th Republic Day parade, according to an official statement issued Saturday.

The tableau will be themed on the three new laws -- the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam -- introduced by the Ministry of Home

Affairs (MHA) in 2024, replacing British-era Indian Penal Code, The Code of Criminal Procedure and Indian Evidence Act, respectively.

The tableau, depicting the new Parliament building with the three new legislations in form of books on top, will highlight the nationwide operationalisation of the new laws and country's transition to a modern, technology-driven, time-bound, and citizen-centric justice system, the statement said.

"The multilingual representation of the new law books

underscores the government's commitment to accessibility, inclusiveness, and transparency, ensuring that the reformed legal framework is understandable and accessible to citizens across the country," the statement read.

The exhibit aims to convey the overhaul of the justice system -- redesigned to be modern, humane and intelligible to citizens -- an essential plank in India's bid to become a 'Viksit Bharat' by adopting the philosophy of "from punishment to justice", it added.

Various provisions of

the new laws, like collection of evidence, e-Sakshya for digital evidence collection, the National Automated Fingerprint Identification System (NAFIS) for biometric identification, e-Summon enabling digitally-signed summons to be issued electronically by courts, and technology-enabled court processes such as virtual hearings, will also be displayed on the tableau.

"The mobile forensic units depicted in the tableau symbolise improved forensic reach and rapid response at crime

scenes," the statement said.

Swift response mechanisms, depicted through integrated control-room systems, enhanced surveillance infrastructure such as CCTV cameras, and the increasing role of trained women police personnel in field operations and response units will also be prominently displayed in the tableau, it said.

"The inclusion of community service as a reformative form of punishment under the new laws reflects a progressive and humane approach to justice," the statement added.

PARLIAMENT BUDGET SESSION

Delhi Court Grants Custody Parole To Er Rashid

KO WEB DESK

Srinagar: A Delhi court on Saturday granted custody parole to jailed Lok Sabha MP Engineer Rashid, permitting him to attend the forthcoming Budget Session of Parliament beginning January 28.

Custody parole entails a prisoner being escorted by armed police personnel to his place of visit.

The order was passed by Additional Sessions Judge Prashant Sharma. Under the terms of custody parole, Rashid will remain under armed police escort during travel and stay outside jail. The court clarified that the parole would be subject to the conditions imposed earlier, including provisions related to travel expenses.

Rashid's counsel, Vikhyat Oberoi, informed the court that an appeal challenging the conditions

concerning travel costs is pending before the Delhi High Court.

Earlier, the court had allowed Rashid custody parole to attend the Winter Session of Parliament in November last year. He was also permitted to attend the Monsoon Session from July 24 to August 4, 2025, under similar arrangements.

In 2024, the court had granted him interim bail to campaign during the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly elections. The MP has been lodged in Delhi's Tihar Jail since 2019 following his arrest by the National Investigation Agency under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act in connection with a 2017 terror-funding case.

In the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, Rashid won the Baramulla seat by defeating National Conference leader Omar Abdullah by a margin of over two lakh votes.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Kashmir Gears

layered security grid at all venues.

As part of the extensive preparations for the 77th Republic Day celebrations, Full Dress Rehearsal functions were held across the Kashmir Division on Saturday, featuring a vibrant preview of the grandeur and patriotic fervour that will mark the national festival on January 26.

The rehearsals featured an impressive March Past by several contingents and captivating cultural presentations by students and troupes that underscored the values of patriotism, discipline and national integration that Republic Day represents.

At Bakshi Stadium, Srinagar, several contingents participated in the march-past, including contingents from Police, CRPF, NCC Cadets, Students and other security agencies.

Following the parade, a series of cultural performances featuring patriotic and cultural songs presented by various artist groups, troupes, and students, aimed at instilling national fervour among the people.

Similar rehearsals took place at district headquarters across Kashmir.

The IGP said the focus of the arrangements is not limited to security alone but also on facilitating public participation. He urged people to attend the celebrations with their families and said schoolchildren should be encouraged to take part in the event.

"The Republic Day function is an open event. People are warmly welcome to join the celebrations and be part of the national spirit," he said.

According to officials, security measures have been planned in a manner that allows the smooth conduct of events without causing inconvenience to the public. They said close coordination among different security agencies is in place to ensure quick response to any situation.

Authorities expressed confidence that with coordinated efforts and public cooperation, Republic Day celebrations will pass off peacefully across the Valley.

Drones, CCTVs Deployed

deployment of police and paramilitary forces along the International Border and the Line of Control. Senior officers, he said, have reviewed security arrangements in sensitive border areas to ensure effective coordination among various agencies.

To further strengthen security, advanced surveillance systems, including drones and high-resolution CCTV cameras, have been deployed to monitor event venues and surrounding areas. Additional checkpoints have been established in Srinagar and other district headquarters, particularly at key entry points.

"Random vehicle checks and frisking operations are being conducted to prevent the movement of subversive elements," the official said.

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha will preside over the main Republic Day function at M A Stadium, where he will take the salute. Chief Minister Omar Abdullah will be the chief guest at the event.

Other ministers will oversee Republic Day functions in different districts across the Union Territory. Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary will preside over the Republic Day event in Srinagar and take the salute there.

Authorities said the comprehensive security arrangements are aimed at ensuring peaceful celebrations across Jammu and Kashmir

'This Snowfall Has

have caused serious damage to both agriculture and horticulture," he added.

Bhat noted that delayed and uneven germination due to lack of moisture had already begun affecting crops. However, he said the snowfall has eased those concerns to a large extent and restored confidence among farmers and orchardists.

Environmental expert Dr Umar Mushtaq said most orchards in Kashmir depend on snowmelt rather than artificial irrigation, making them particularly vulnerable during long dry spells. He said the absence of precipitation had disrupted natural irrigation systems and reduced water availability.

"This snowfall will replenish soil moisture, reduce stress on fruit trees and help curb pest attacks," he said. "It will also support the water table and improve irrigation prospects during the summer months."

Farmers who had sown rabi crops said the lack of rainfall had delayed seed germination and created uncertainty about yields. Mustard, an important rabi crop harvested in April, was among those under threat due to moisture

deficiency. With the arrival of snowfall, farmers expressed renewed hope that crops would now germinate properly and develop normally.

"This snowfall was the need of the hour," said a farmer from south Kashmir. "The seeds will sprout now, and we are hopeful of a better harvest."

Officials from the Public Health Engineering department said the prolonged dry spell had pushed several water sources to critical levels, with some drying up completely. They said the recent snowfall offers hope that springs and streams will gradually recharge, helping improve water supply and support hydropower generation.

While it may take a few days for water sources to fully replenish, those associated with agriculture and horticulture said the snowfall has eased immediate stress on crops and orchards and improved prospects for the rural economy. Many expressed optimism that adequate natural moisture will translate into better yields and improved economic returns in the coming season.

More Rain,

temporary disruption of normal life in several areas.

Meanwhile, weather conditions improved on Saturday morning, allowing restoration of essential services in some areas. Flight operations at Srinagar airport, which were suspended following heavy snowfall, resumed after clearance of snow from the runway. Officials said operations are expected to remain largely normal, though delays and cancellations due to weather conditions cannot be ruled out.

The Meteorological Department has also forecast light rain and snow at isolated places on January 25, followed by a more active spell beginning January 26. From January 28 to February 3, weather is expected to remain mainly dry, though partly cloudy conditions may prevail.

In view of the forecast, the department has advised farmers to suspend field operations until January 28. People residing in snow-bound higher reaches have been cautioned against venturing into avalanche-prone and steep areas during the period of active weather.

Authorities said they are closely monitoring the situation and urged the public to remain alert and follow official advisories as the fresh weather system approaches the region.

Meanwhile, Kashmir recorded a sharp drop in night temperatures on Saturday, with several places reporting sub-zero minimums.

Zethan Rafiabad recorded the lowest temperature at minus 10.9 degrees Celsius, followed by Gulmarg at minus 12.0 degrees Celsius and Sonamarg at minus 10.5 degrees Celsius.

Other areas in the Kashmir Valley also reported freezing temperatures, including Beerwah in Budgam at minus 8.2 degrees Celsius, Pahalgam at minus 7.6 degrees Celsius, and Shopian at minus 7.1 degrees Celsius.

Srinagar registered a minimum temperature of minus 1.4 degrees Celsius, while Srinagar Airport recorded minus 3.2 degrees Celsius.

Other areas across the Valley, including Kupwara, Kokernag, Pampore, Awantipora, Anantnag, Baramulla, Pulwama, Kulgam, and Bandipora, experienced temperatures ranging from minus 2.0 to minus 6.2 degrees Celsius.

In the Jammu region, comparatively milder conditions were recorded. Katra recorded a minimum of 6.6 degrees Celsius, Jammu Airport 4.7 degrees Celsius, and Jammu city 4.5 degrees Celsius.

Other districts, including Banihal, Batote, Bhaderwah, Kathua, Udhampur, Ramban, Samba, Rajouri, Reasi, and Kishtwar, reported minimum temperatures ranging from minus 4.4 to 3.8 degrees Celsius.

Meanwhile, the valley received widespread rainfall and snowfall over the past 24 hours, with several areas recording significant accumulation.

Srinagar recorded 37 mm of rainfall and no snowfall on January 23, followed by 16.4 mm of rain and 2 cm of snow on January 24, bringing the total precipitation to 53.4 mm of rain and 2 cm of snow. Qazigund recorded 94.2 mm of rainfall and 15 cm of snow, while Pahalgam saw 66.2 mm of rain and 64.2 cm of snow.

Kupwara received 45.5 mm of rain and 35 cm of snow, and Gulmarg recorded the highest totals with 101.2 mm of rain and 96.8 cm of snow.

Other areas, including Kukernag, Banihal, Batote, Bhaderwah, Jammu, Katra, Kathua, Mirpur, Awantipora, Udhampur, Ramban, Samba, and Rajouri, also reported varying levels of rainfall, while snowfall was recorded primarily in hilly and valley regions.

Flights Resume;

snow from the runway, apron and taxiways on Saturday morning following an improvement in weather conditions.

"A joint inspection was carried out and flight operations were resumed. A flight has already landed at the aerodrome," officials at the airport said, adding that operations are expected to run largely smoothly.

However, an IndiGo flight scheduled for early morning was cancelled due to unfavourable weather, while a few other flights were cancelled owing to NOTAMs issued in Delhi. Some services also experienced delays, officials said.

Flight operations had been cancelled on Friday after a major snowfall led to the accumulation of snow on the runway.

Meanwhile, efforts were underway to restore traffic on the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway and other key roads that remained closed for the second consecutive day due to slippery conditions following snowfall.

Officials said hundreds of commuters were evacuated and provided food and shelter by the Indian Army, police and civil administration after they were stranded on the 270-kilometre Srinagar-Jammu National Highway, the only all-weather road connecting the Kashmir Valley with the rest of the country.

Deputy Superintendent of Police, Traffic National Highway (Banihal), S P Singh said snow clearance operations on NH-44 were in the final stages and stranded vehicles on both sides of the highway would be cleared on priority.

"Over 900 vehicles are stranded in the Ramban sector, while more than 2,000 others, including trucks carrying essential commodities, are waiting for clearance to move towards Jammu, Udhampur, Kulgam and Anantnag," Singh said.

He added that some stretches along the Ramsco-Banihal sector remain slippery, prompting road agencies to sprinkle salt and urea to improve driving conditions. Normal traffic is expected to resume once stranded vehicles are cleared, he said.

The Army carried out multiple rescue and relief operations along the NH-44 axis amid heavy snowfall and sub-zero temperatures. Troops from Nachlana Army Camp responded to distress calls from stranded civilians and tourists, providing food, drinking water, hot beverages and first aid.

In one such operation, 32 martial arts cadets of Warriors Taekwondo Academy, accompanied by coaches and parents, were evacuated to Nachlana Camp after being stranded due to intense snowfall. They were provided warm meals, clothing, medical assistance and shelter until conditions improved, officials said.

Army personnel also assisted 65 stranded passengers at Sangaldan Railway Station, supplying essential items after braving heavy snowfall on Friday.

A traffic department official said several other roads, including the Mughal Road, Sinthan Top road, Srinagar-Leh National Highway and dozens of internal roads across districts, remained closed due to snowfall.

"People are advised not to travel until these roads are restored and declared safe," the official said.

The BRO is also engaged in restoring the Jammu-Rajouri-Poonch National Highway, which remains closed between Rajouri and Jarran Wali Gali in Poonch following heavy snowfall.

Officials said moderate to heavy snowfall was recorded in high-altitude areas of the Jammu region, including tourist destinations such as Patnitop, Nathatop and Bhaderwah, while rainfall in the plains, including Jammu city, ended a dry spell of over two months. Some areas of Rajouri, Doda and Udhampur witnessed snowfall after more than a decade, they added.

UP Binds India

and Puranas. To him, he said, Uttar Pradesh represents a wellspring that has nurtured the country's cultural consciousness over centuries.

"Words fall short in capturing Uttar Pradesh's richness. It must be felt and lived to be fully appreciated," Sinha said.

Referring to the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati rivers, the Lieutenant Governor said the region stands as a sacred junction with millennia of history and serves as a spiritual centre offering timeless wisdom to humanity. He added that its cultural and literary heritage continues to stir global consciousness.

Sinha said Uttar Pradesh represents India's

vital core, binding the nation together across regions and traditions. Reflecting on the teachings of the state's spiritual luminaries, he said their deep contemplation offered humanity an invaluable lesson that the ultimate quest is self-understanding.

"The most profound journey we can undertake is the inward one. This wisdom provides essential guidance in today's rapidly changing world," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor also highlighted Uttar Pradesh's recent development trajectory, describing it as exemplary, and expressed hope that the state would continue to achieve greater economic progress and prosperity in the coming years.

The cultural evening was attended by Member of Parliament from Hathras Anoop Pradhan, senior government officials, students, and residents of Uttar Pradesh living in the Union Territory.

J&K Budget Session

was attended by all MLAs and senior leaders of its J&K unit.

Senior BJP leader and former minister Pawan Gupta said that they will question the government for its failure to fulfill its election promises.

"The government has completely failed to fulfill its election promises," he said, adding that the party will also raise the issue of flood victims and seek accountability over the package provided by the Government of India for rebuilding infrastructure.

Gupta further said that the party will question the government for weakening the institution of the MLA.

The BJP's attacks on the government in the House will be spearheaded by the Leader of the Opposition Sunil Kumar Sharma, who has been the main target of the NC leadership while countering the saffron party's accusations over the past 16 months.

On the other hand, Kashmir-based parties like Peoples Democratic Party, Peoples Conference are also likely to question the government over its 2024 assembly election commitments, reservation and other emotive issues concerning Kashmir.

However, the opposition from Kashmir-based small parties and independents is unlikely to be effective, given their limited strength and lack of unity. They have often targeted each other, leaving little room for any unity among them.(KNO)

CM Holds Pre-Budget

was attended by Ministers Sakina Itoo, Javaid Ahmad Dar and Satish Sharma, along with Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Principal Secretary Finance Santosh D. Vaidya, Deputy Commissioners of the concerned districts, senior officers of the Finance Department and other officials.

During the consultations, legislators from South Kashmir districts including Anantnag, Pulwama, Kulgam and Shopian placed a range of proposals before the Chief Minister. The demands focused largely on infrastructure development and citizen-centric welfare initiatives aimed at addressing local needs in their respective constituencies.

Similarly, MLAs from North Kashmir districts including Kupwara, Baramulla and Bandipora presented their suggestions, seeking adequate budgetary allocations in the forthcoming Budget 2026-27 for developmental works and public welfare programmes.

The legislators called for enhanced funding across key sectors such as health, education, agriculture, horticulture and irrigation. They also highlighted the need for road widening projects, construction of community halls, strengthening of sports infrastructure, youth-centric initiatives, employment generation programmes and establishment of fire stations in far-flung areas.

Several MLAs emphasized the importance of dedicated allocations for climate change mitigation measures to prevent loss of life and property during natural calamities. They also pitched for the establishment of public libraries and skill development centres, alongside ensuring time-bound utilization of funds for the execution of approved projects.

The legislators further stressed the need to strengthen irrigation infrastructure and tap the tourism potential of the region as a means to create sustainable livelihood opportunities for local youth.

Assuring the legislators, the Chief Minister said that all suggestions and proposals put forth during the consultations would be given due consideration while finalising the budget. He reiterated the government's commitment

to balanced, inclusive and regionally equitable development across Jammu and Kashmir.

The pre-budget consultations are part of the government's effort to incorporate grassroots-level feedback into policy planning and ensure that development priorities reflect regional and sectoral requirements.

BJP Rules Out

development of the entire Jammu and Kashmir, ensuring welfare for every citizen without any discrimination based on region, religion, or any other divisive consideration," BJP national general secretary, incharge JK, Tarun Chugh told reporters.

He was responding about the BJP stand on the demand recently raised by party MLA Sham Lal Sharma and supported by several other leaders including legislator Vikram Randhawa.

Chugh accused National Conference and PDP of propagating "divisive narratives" to create a wedge between the two regions and also claimed that Omar Abdullah government has miserably failed to deliver on its promises made to the people of the Union Territory.

Prominent among others who attended the workshop included BJP J&K president Sat Sharma, former Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh Jairam Thakur, Speaker of the Delhi Legislative Assembly Vijender Gupta, JK Leader of the Opposition Sunil Sharma, a party spokesman said.

He said the workshop was conducted over multiple structured sessions aimed at enhancing legislative competence, ideological clarity, and organizational coordination among the elected representatives.

Chugh said BJP conducts such workshops at regular intervals to ideologically and organisationally strengthen its office bearers and elected representatives.

"These interactions are crucial to align leaders with the party's policies, programmes, and vision, while also equipping them to effectively respond to the prevailing socio-political challenges," he said.

Addressing the workshop, Thakur who is also LoP in Himachal Pradesh, reflected on his long-standing emotional and organisational association with Jammu, recalling his formative years as a party whole-timer.

Presenting a detailed and practical roadmap for MLAs focusing constituency-centric development, he said the MLAs must act as solution-oriented representatives who raise public issues effectively while maintaining the dignity of democratic institutions.

J&K BJP president also reiterated that his party considers JK as a single unit and said time is ripe for bringing back Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

"The politics of NC and PDP is Kashmir-centric but we stand firm in our stand that the entire JK including the parts under illegal occupation of Pakistan is a single unit," he said.

He said the upcoming budget session is likely to be stormy as his party MLAs will highlight the alleged failures of the NC government to meet the expectations of the people.

Interacting with reporters, Leader of Opposition in JK assembly Sunil Sharma also asserted that his party is not in favour of division of the two regions of J&K.

Asked about the recent remarks of the chief minister against him for raising Jammu statehood demand, he said no BJP worker dreams of becoming the Chief Minister.

"I have come from a poor and an ordinary family, and for me the nation, religion and society are supreme. The Chief Minister's post is not a big thing.... In the NC, only members of Abdullah's family can become Chief Minister. Leaders like Ali Mohd Sagar, Abdul Rahim Rather and M Shafi Uri, who gave their lives to the party, saw their aspirations crushed.

"In the NC, only the Abdullah family can dream of holding the CM's post," he said.

Lashing out at BJP leaders especially the LoP Sharma for Jammu statehood demand, Abdullah recently said the bifurcation talk is a personal power play.

"If he wants to be Chief Minister, why only Jammu and not JK? If ambition drives him so much, let him contest Jammu municipal elections," he had said.

Asked about the statement of Peoples Conference chairman Sajad Gani Lone who supported BJP's leaders demand for separate Jammu, Sharma said he had only won his own assembly seat in Handwara and therefore he has no justification to talk about the entire J&K.

"Let him first expand his party to the 10 districts of Kashmir and then speak about the division. He has got a mandate for his constituency," he said.

WSK 2026

Racing Champ Atiqa Mir Secures Drive with World No 1

Press Trust of India

LA CONCA (ITALY): Indian racing prodigy Atiqa Mir has secured a coveted drive for reigning world champions Modena Racing Team for the 2026 season of the prestigious WSK championship, considered as the 'Formula 1' of karting.

Atiqa, all of 11, has taken the tougher route to the top by opting to race in the highly competitive junior category (age 12-14) this season.

On the back of her impressive performances in the mini category (age 8-12) last year, the Formula 1 Academy-supported driver was signed for the entire season and will drive in the WSK Super Master Series, WSK Euro Series, and WSK Final Cup amongst other championships.

In the process, Atiqa will become the first Indian female ever to drive in the OKNJ category in WSK and, remarkably, will be the only female on the entire grid of 37 world class drivers.

The WSK series is the highest level of karting, which attracts the best driving talent from around the world, besides



leading kart and engine manufacturers.

The WSK series is focused on developing young drivers by providing a platform for them to improve their racecraft, technical knowledge, and understanding of motorsport.

Formula 1 world champions including Lewis Hamilton, Max Verstappen and Sebastian Vettel have raced in WSK in their formative years.

Moving up to the OKNJ junior category from mini is a big step up for Atiqa, but she is up for the challenge. From 10 bhp engines to 29 bhp engines with speeds of 126 kmph and much bigger karts at-

tracting G-forces of more than 2.5, Atiqa's physical fitness and adaptability will be tested against the best in the world.

"I am so excited and grateful for Modena to sign me. To join such an elite team and reigning world champions in this class is a great honour. I will be tested against the best drivers in the world and am up for the challenge. The grids in WSK are so close, and the driving level is the best in the world. I hope to learn from them and improve myself," said Atiqa.

Atiqa's father, Asif Mir, who is India's first National Karting Champion,

said it was a conscious decision to fast-track her into the junior class.

"We are putting Atiqa straight into the deep end. It is best for her development. She could have easily stayed in Mini and won races and championships, but our goal is Formula 1, and her development as a driver is of utmost importance. She has the fitness to cope with the added G-forces. I'm looking forward to a tough learning year for her," he said.

Atiqa begins her campaign on January 25 with the WSK Super Master Series Round 1 in La Conca, Italy.

U-19 World Cup

Rampant India Crush New Zealand by 7 Wickets

Press Trust of India

BULAWAYO: Skipper Ayush Mhatre's 27-ball 53 underlined India's another dominant show as they notched a crushing seven-wicket victory via DLS method over New Zealand in the U-19 World Cup here on Saturday.

An all-round India won a truncated game of 37-overs-per-side with complete ease, stamping their authority in the competition with another big victory.

Chasing a revised target of 130, India made 130 for three in a mere 13.3 overs to record their third consecutive win and top Group B.

RS Ambrish (8-1-29-4) and Henil Patel (7.2-1-23-3) led the bowling charge early for India who had asked New Zealand to bat first in damp conditions of the rain-truncated game.

New Zealand were reduced to 69 for 7 as Indian bowlers continued to strike right from the word go, and eventually bowled the Kiwis out for 135 in 36.2 overs.

Snehith Reddy (10) was the only New Zealand batter among the top five to score in double digits. Even as the lower-order resisted, New Zealand never had enough runs on the board. Jacob Cotter (23), Callum



Samson (37) and Selwin Sanjay (28) added some valuable late runs for New Zealand but none of them could impose themselves against the Indians, for whom the trio of Khilan Patel, Mohamed Enaan and Kanish Chouhan claimed a wicket each.

In reply, India lost Aaron George (7) early but Vaibhav Sooryavanshi (40 off 23 balls; 2 fours, 3 sixes) and skipper Mhatre led the response with a robust 76-run stand for the second wicket.

Both Sooryavanshi and Mhatre struck at over 150 to pulverise the New Zealand bowlers, who just did not have enough to defend. Sooryavanshi, how-

ever, missed his personal milestone when Jaskaran Sandhu had him caught by Mason Clarke. But Mhatre raised a fine fifty, falling for 53 off 27 balls with two fours and six sixes, caught by Flynn Morey off Selwin.

The pair of Vihaan Malhotra (17 not out) and Vedant Trivedi (13 not out) then took India over the line halfway through the 14th over.

"There was a simple plan because the ball was coming nicely on to the bat. There was nothing planned (on the weather), just reacted to the ball and there was a simple plan. They were going with bouncers and I was ready for that," Mhatre told the broadcaster after

the match.

"The boys are really confident and the coaches as well so I am very happy with the players. Boys showed the character and really good attitude. It wasn't easy for us as well due to the weather. The boys are mature enough to adapt to conditions (on weather interruptions) and they just backed their basics," he added.

BRIEF SCORES:

New Zealand: 135 all out in 36.2 overs (Callum Samson 37; RS Ambrish 4/29, Henil Patel 3/23).

India: 130 for 3 in 13.3 overs (Vaibhav Sooryavanshi 40, Ayush Mhatre 53; Selwin Sanjay 1/22).

SANTOSH TROPHY

String of Draws Keeps Kerala Atop Group B

Press Trust of India

DHAKUAKHANA (ASSAM): All the three Group B matches in the final round of the National Football Championship for Santosh Trophy ended in draws on Saturday, as Kerala remained on top of standings.

Former champions Railways and Kerala shared the spoils in an entertaining 1-1 draw at the Silapathar Football Stadium.

While Kerala took the lead through an own goal from Railways defender Soibam Abhinash Singh in the 37th minute, impact substitute Faseen PK scored the equaliser in the 80th minute.

Kerala gradually settled into the game and began probing the Railways defence with neat passing moves and through balls. Their pressure paid off in the 37th minute.

Shijun T broke down the right flank after being released with a through ball and whipped in a low cross into the box. In an attempt to clear the danger, Railways defender Abhinash inadvertently turned the ball into his own net, handing Ker-



ala the lead at the break.

Railways responded with renewed urgency in the second half. Ngangbam Pacha Singh and Prabik Ghising tested Alkesh Raj with a couple of threatening free-kicks as the former champions searched for an equaliser.

Their persistence finally paid off in the 80th minute from a set-piece. Ghising swung in a corner from the left and sub-

stitute Faseen PK rose highest to power home a well-taken header, restoring parity.

In another Group B match, Punjab trailed thrice but restore parity every time to hold Meghalaya to a 3-3 draw at the Dhakuakhana Football Stadium.

Odisha and Services played out a goal-less draw at the Silapathar Football Stadium in the third match of the day.

Inter Milan Bounce Back From 2-0 Down, Demolish Pisa To Extend Lead At Top Of Serie A

AGENCIES

Serie A leader Inter Milan recovered from conceding two early goals to beat lowly Pisa 6-2 and open a six-point gap on Friday. One of the shock results of the season looked possible at the San Siro when Inter found itself 2-0 down midway through the first half against a team that had not won in 10 league games. However, three goals in the seven minutes before halftime transformed the match and put Inter on the way to a ninth win in 10 league games.

Pisa took the lead after 11 minutes thanks to a moment of inspiration from veteran striker Stefano Moreo. Yann Sommer's pass out was poor and Moreo pounced before looking up from 35 meters out and stroking the ball over the goalkeeper's head into the empty net.

Stefano doubled Pisa's lead in the 23rd with a header from a corner kick.

Inter pulled one back from the penalty spot seven minutes before halftime when Piotr Zielinski converted after Matteo



Tramoni handled inside the box.

Lautaro Martinez nodded in the equalizer two minutes later and Francesco Pio Esposito hit the third on the stroke of halftime when he headed home a cross from Alessandro Bastoni.

Federico Dimarco made it 4-2 eight minutes from time, Ange-Yoan Bonny added a fifth with a nice individual effort four minutes later, and Henrikh Mkhitaryan rounded

off the scoring with a sixth in stoppage time.

Inter was six points clear of city rival AC Milan and nine ahead of defending champion Napoli.

The win was especially welcome for Inter given that the top four play each other this weekend. AC Milan is at fourth-placed Roma on Sunday, and fifth-placed Juventus is at home to Napoli on the same day.



Chandigarh Trounce Kerala to Register First Win

MANGALAPURAM - Chandigarh bowlers tore through Kerala batting line-up for a second time to carry their side to an emphatic innings and 92-run victory on the third day of a Ranji Trophy Elite Group B match here on Saturday.

Kerala resumed from overnight 21 for two and required to score 256 more runs to avoid an innings defeat. But off-spinner Vishu Kashyap (3/41) and pacer Rohit Dhanda (4/38) wreaked havoc as the home side was bowled out for 185.

For Kerala, Vishnu Vinod (56) and Salman Nizar (53) added 63 runs for a steady fifth wicket stand, but it only delayed the inevitable.

The result helped Chandigarh to grab seven points, including a bonus point for an innings win, and move up to seventh in the group with 8 points.

Kerala also have 8 points, but were pushed down to eighth because Chandigarh have a win under their belt. (AGENCIES)

ICC Replaces Bangladesh with Scotland in T20 World Cup

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The ICC on Saturday confirmed that Scotland has replaced Bangladesh in the upcoming T20 World Cup, saying the "difficult decision" was taken since it was not feasible to meet BCB's request to shift their matches to Sri Lanka so close to the tournament.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) refused to let its team travel to India citing security concerns in the wake of Mustafizur Rahman's ouster from the IPL.

ICC maintained that there was no verifiable security threat to the Bangladesh national team, officials or supporters in India and it was not appropriate to amend the published event schedule.

Scotland's entry into the tournament, starting February 7, ended the suspense over the fate of Bangladesh in the event after BCB stayed adamant in its demand and even suggested that its group be swapped with Ireland's.

At the ICC Board meeting on Wednesday, Bangladesh lost it

proposal to shift matches by an overwhelming 14-2 margin with only Pakistan supporting its cause.

"Bangladesh will no longer compete in the upcoming ICC Men's T20 World Cup, after the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) refused to participate in the tournament per the published match schedule," ICC said in a statement.

"The decision follows an extensive process undertaken by the ICC to address concerns raised by the BCB regarding the hosting of its scheduled matches in India."

It has been learnt that top ICC officials including chairman Jay Shah were in Dubai on Friday and late evening an e-mail was sent to BCB chairman Aminul Islam Bulbul informing him about global body's decision.

"The ICC's assessments concluded that there was no credible or verifiable security threat to the Bangladesh national team, officials or supporters in India."

"In light of these findings, and after careful consideration of the broader implications, the ICC determined that it was not appro-



appropriate to amend the published event schedule," the statement added.

The ICC said it had given BCB a 24-hour time-frame to confirm whether its team would participate in India as scheduled.

"As no confirmation was received within the deadline, the ICC proceeded in line with its established governance and qualification processes to identify a replacement team."

"Scotland are the next-highest ranked T20I team that had originally missed T20 World Cup qualification. They are currently ranked 14th, which in fact is ahead of competing teams Namibia, the

United Arab Emirates, Nepal, USA, Canada, Oman and Italy.

"Scotland has been called up to take Bangladesh's place in Group C, joining England, Italy, Nepal and the West Indies."

Scotland will play their group games against West Indies (February 7), Italy (February 9) and England (February 14) in Kolkata followed by a game against Nepal in Mumbai on February 17.

Bangladesh Sports Ministry advisor Asif Nazrul had advised against national team travelling to India, citing security issues despite being given repeated assurances by the ICC.

The BCB, in a desperate mea-

sure, had also approached the Dispute Resolution Committee (DRC) of the ICC, unaware about the terms of reference of the sub-committee which is not allowed to hear an appeal against a decision made by its own Board of Directors.

While the mandatory independent security assessment threat for Bangladesh was "low to moderate", same for all teams, anti-India hardliner Nazrul issued a diktat as representative of the interim government that the team cannot be allowed to travel to India in these circumstances.

In fact, the meeting between Nazrul and national team players turned out to be a one-way communication with Nazrul doing all the talking and telling the star cricketers that they won't be allowed to participate in the tournament.

Financial implication for BCB The implications of this unceremonious ouster will also badly hit BCB's coffers. The board will lose USD 500,000 participation fee that each nation gets. But the bigger potential loss will be ICC's annual revenue.

Pak Udecided on T20 World Cup After BD Ouster

LAHORE: PCB chairman Mohsin Naqvi on Saturday said the Pakistan government will take the final and binding decision on whether its national team will participate in the upcoming T20 World Cup, following Bangladesh's removal from the tournament.

Addressing a press conference here, Naqvi said the matter would be placed before Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, who is currently out of the country, once he returns.

"Whether we play in the T20 World Cup or not, the decision will be taken by the government," Naqvi said.

"Our PM (Shahbaz Sharif) is out of the country. When he comes, we will take advice from him. The decision by the government will be final and binding and if they say no then they (ICC) may invite any other team."

Bangladesh lost their place in the T20 World Cup after re-

fusing to travel to India citing security reasons, a move that prompted the International Cricket Council (ICC) to replace them with Scotland.

Pakistan are scheduled to play all their matches in Sri Lanka as per an agreement with the BCCI.

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) was the only member nation to support Bangladesh in their demand to move their matches to Sri Lanka as 14 others voted against it.

Naqvi said Bangladesh, whom he described as a "big stakeholder" in world cricket, had been unfairly treated by the ICC.

"Bangladesh is a big stakeholder and they have been unfairly treated in this case. This I maintained in Wednesday's meeting as well and their stance has many factors which I will tell when the situation arrives," he said. (PTI)

16 Days In Digital Arrest

How NRI Couple Lost Rs 14 Crore To Cyber Fraud

Press Trust of India

New Delhi: The Delhi Police has arrested eight persons, including a priest, from three states in connection with the alleged duping of an elderly NRI couple of over Rs 14 crore through "digital arrest" and busted a cyber-fraud racket with links to operators based in Cambodia and Nepal, officials said on Saturday.

The accused were apprehended from Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and Odisha following a multi-state operation that exposed the well-coordinated network engaged in impersonating law-enforcement agencies and siphoning off victims' money through mule bank accounts, they added.

Divyang Patel (30) and Kru-tik Shitole (26) from Gujarat's Vadodara, Mahavir Sharma alias Neel (27) from Odisha's Bhubaneswar, Ankit Mishra alias Robin from Gujarat, Arun Kumar Tiwari (45) and Pradyu-man Tiwari alias S P Tiwari (44) from Uttar Pradesh's Varanasi, and Bhupender Kumar Mishra (37) and Aadesh Kumar Singh

(36) from Lucknow have been arrested in connection with the incident, the officials said.

Patel and Shitole were arrested on January 15, police said. Patel, a B.Com graduate, has passed the CA (Intermediate) exam. "He runs an NGO named Floresta Foundation and also provides financial services through his firm, Tatva Business Advisors," police said.

Shitole holds a diploma in information technology from New Zealand.

Arun Kumar Tiwari, arrested on January 16, is a BA graduate and works as a private data-entry operator outside the Income Tax Office in Varanasi. He also runs an NGO called Shivas Charitable Foundation, police said.

Sharma, arrested on January 19, is a B.Com graduate. Pradyuman Tiwari, arrested on January 20, works as a priest and performs private "pooja" for devotees at the Varanasi ghats, the officials said.

Ankit Mishra, who was arrested on January 21, is a B.Com graduate and has previously worked as a sales executive with SBI Cap Securities, police

said.

Kumar, also arrested on January 21, holds an MBA degree and was employed in a private job, they added.

Singh, arrested the same day, has completed BA and used to provide tuition and private coaching to students, police said.

The case came to light after a 77-year-old woman living in south Delhi's Greater Kailash was allegedly duped of more than Rs 14.84 crore.

According to police, the victim received a call in December 2025, claiming that a SIM card issued in her name was linked to a money-laundering case.

She was then placed on video calls by the fraudsters, who posed as officials from agencies such as the CBI and police, showed her a forged arrest warrant and conducted fake "court proceedings".

The victim and her husband were allegedly kept under round-the-clock video surveillance and threatened with dire consequences if they contacted anyone. Under fear and coercion, they were persuaded to

transfer funds, including from fixed deposits and share investments, into so-called "RBI-mandated accounts" for "verification", with false assurances that the money would be returned.

A total amount of Rs 14.84 crore was transferred through eight transactions, police said.

An e-FIR was registered at the Special Cell's IFSO police station here on January 10 under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and a special team formed to investigate the case.

Through technical surveillance and an analysis of bank accounts, police tracked the money trail leading to several alleged mule-account holders.

The investigators said the accused acted as facilitators by procuring and operating mule accounts and layering defrauded funds at the behest of the international syndicate.

Police seized seven mobile phones and chequebooks during the operation. Further investigation is on to unearth the entire money trail and identify other conspirators, the officials added.



MANOJ SINHA



Lieutenant Governor,
Jammu & Kashmir

LOK BHAVAN
JAMMU-180001/SRINAGAR-19001

MESSAGE

On the occasion of the 16th National Voters' Day, I extend my heartfelt greetings to all the citizens and commend the citizens, Election Commission of India, Electoral officials, and every stakeholder, who contributes to the conduct of free, fair, and inclusive elections. This day is celebrated every year to mark the foundation day of Election commission of India established on 25th January 1950.

The Theme for National Voters' Day this year is "My India My Vote" with the tagline of "Citizen at the Heart of Indian Democracy" which signifies the importance of citizens as voters for Nation building and strengthening of democracy. National Voters' Day serves as a reminder of the immense responsibility we share in preserving the strength and vibrancy of our democracy. Voting is not merely a right; it is a civic duty that empowers every citizen to shape the nation's future. It is therefore essential that every eligible individual finds their rightful place on the electoral rolls.

This year, particular emphasis is being laid on the Special Intensive Revision of Electoral Rolls, an exercise fundamental towards maintaining the accuracy, integrity, and inclusiveness of our voter lists. I urge all eligible citizens, especially first-time voters, women, senior citizens, persons with disabilities, and members of marginalized or mobile populations to actively verify their enrolment and update their details, wherever required.

Election Department has made enrolment easier and more accessible through door-to-door verification, special camps, awareness programmes, and digital platforms such as the Voter Helpline App and National Voters' Service Portal. A complete and authentic electoral roll is the foundation of credible elections. I strongly urge community leaders, educational institutions; civil society, and youth organizations to support the ongoing revision process and help ensure that no eligible voter is left behind.

Let us renew our shared commitment towards strengthening participatory democracy and preserving the constitutional values that unite us. I urge everyone to enroll, verify, and exercise their franchise with pride and responsibility.

Manoj Sinha

(Manoj Sinha)



Atal Dulloo, IAS



Chief Secretary,
Jammu & Kashmir

MESSAGE

My warm greetings to all citizens, government departments, and election officials on the occasion of the 16th National Voters' Day. This day is a celebration of the power of the vote an instrument, through which every individual participates in the governance and progress of our nation.

The theme of National Voters' Day this year, "My India My vote" reminds us that every vote matters and inclusive participation is mandatory for healthy democracy. The Election Commission of India has taken several initiatives to ensure that No eligible voter is left behind and special focus has been on facilitating participation of woman voters, senior citizens, persons with disability, first time voters, migrant voters, service voters and other marginal sections through technology driven interventions and voter friendly reforms.

Continued efforts towards purification of electoral rolls including pre revision activities and intensive outreach programmes are essential to maintain the integrity and accuracy of electoral processes. I specially welcome our young and first time voters who represent the future of our nation and democracy, to get themselves enrolled and exercise their franchise in future with responsibility, awareness and pride.

Let us all resolve to actively participate in the electoral process not just on polling day but be associated with it at all steps to be informed and responsible citizens, through use of digital platforms such as Voters Helpline App and National Voters' Service Portal besides cooperating in door-to-door verification and attending the special camps, awareness programmes being organized by Election machinery. I urge all residents to make full use of these services and take an active part in this democratic process.

For healthy democracy let us pledge to play our role to ensure that no eligible voter is left out and no ineligible voter is enrolled, for this let us work together with commitment and responsibility, to uphold the democratic ideals enshrined in our constitution.

Atal Dulloo

(Atal Dulloo, IAS)



Sanjeev Verma, IAS



Chief Electoral Officer, J&K
Principal Secretary to Government
Election Department
Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir

MESSAGE

On the momentous occasion of the 16th National Voters' Day, I extend greetings to all the citizens, election machinery, and stakeholders. National Voters' Day is not only a celebration of the right to vote but also a reaffirmation of our collective resolve to ensure that every eligible citizen is duly enrolled and empowered to participate in the electoral process.

This year's theme highlights the continuous efforts of the Election Commission of India to make our electoral system inclusive, accurate, and transparent. In this spirit, we must place special emphasis on the ongoing preparatory activities for Special Intensive Revision of Electoral Rolls, which is a vital exercise for ensuring the purification of Electoral Rolls that no eligible voter is left behind.

All are requested to come forward and verify their entries in the electoral roll. Updating one's information, registering afresh, or correcting any errors is essential for building credible voters' list. I also appeal Political Parties, Educational Institutions, Civil Society Organizations, and Local Bodies to actively support this drive and help disseminate accurate information at the grassroot levels.

Our field teams, comprising EROs, AEROS, BLO Supervisors, BLOs and other allied staff are working with utmost dedication to make registration accessible, through door-to-door verification, special camps, and digital platforms such as Voter Helpline App and National Voters' Service Portal, I urge upon every citizen to make full use of these facilities and participate, wholeheartedly, in this important democratic exercise.

On this National Voters' Day, let us reaffirm our commitment to the core principle of "MY INDIA MY VOTE" by ensuring a complete, clean, and inclusive electoral roll, which is the bedrock of a strong democracy. Let us work together to ensure that every eligible citizen is registered, every voice is heard, and every vote strengthens the future of our great nation.

Sanjeev Verma

(Sanjeev Verma)

SRK, Salman Prove People Get Work Across Religions: Govil

Press Trust of India

Mumbai, Jan 24: Veteran actor-politician Arun Govil responded to a recent remark by A R Rahman about communal bias in Hindi cinema and said that the film industry stands as a testament to diversity, providing opportunities for people from all backgrounds.

The Oscar-winning composer told the BBC Asian Network

in a recent interview that the volume of his work in the Hindi film industry has declined over the past eight years, suggesting it may be linked to what he described as a communal thing.

While giving examples of actors like Dilip Kumar, Shah Rukh Khan, Salman Khan, and Aamir Khan, Govil said the industry promotes inclusivity.

"In our industry, it has never happened where people

have not got work due to communal bias. There are examples of this in our industry. In our industry, people of every religion have worked. Even today, there is no such thing. In fact, the film industry is the only industry where there is no communal bias.

"Earlier, we've had actors like Dilip Kumar, he was the king of the industry in his time. Even today, Shah Rukh,

Salman, Aamir, they are all stars, if there were communal bias, how would they have become stars," Govil told PTI.

Rahman later issued a clarification on social media on January 18, saying his remarks were misunderstood and that he never intended to cause pain.

"India is my inspiration, my teacher and my home. I understand that intentions can sometimes be misunderstood.

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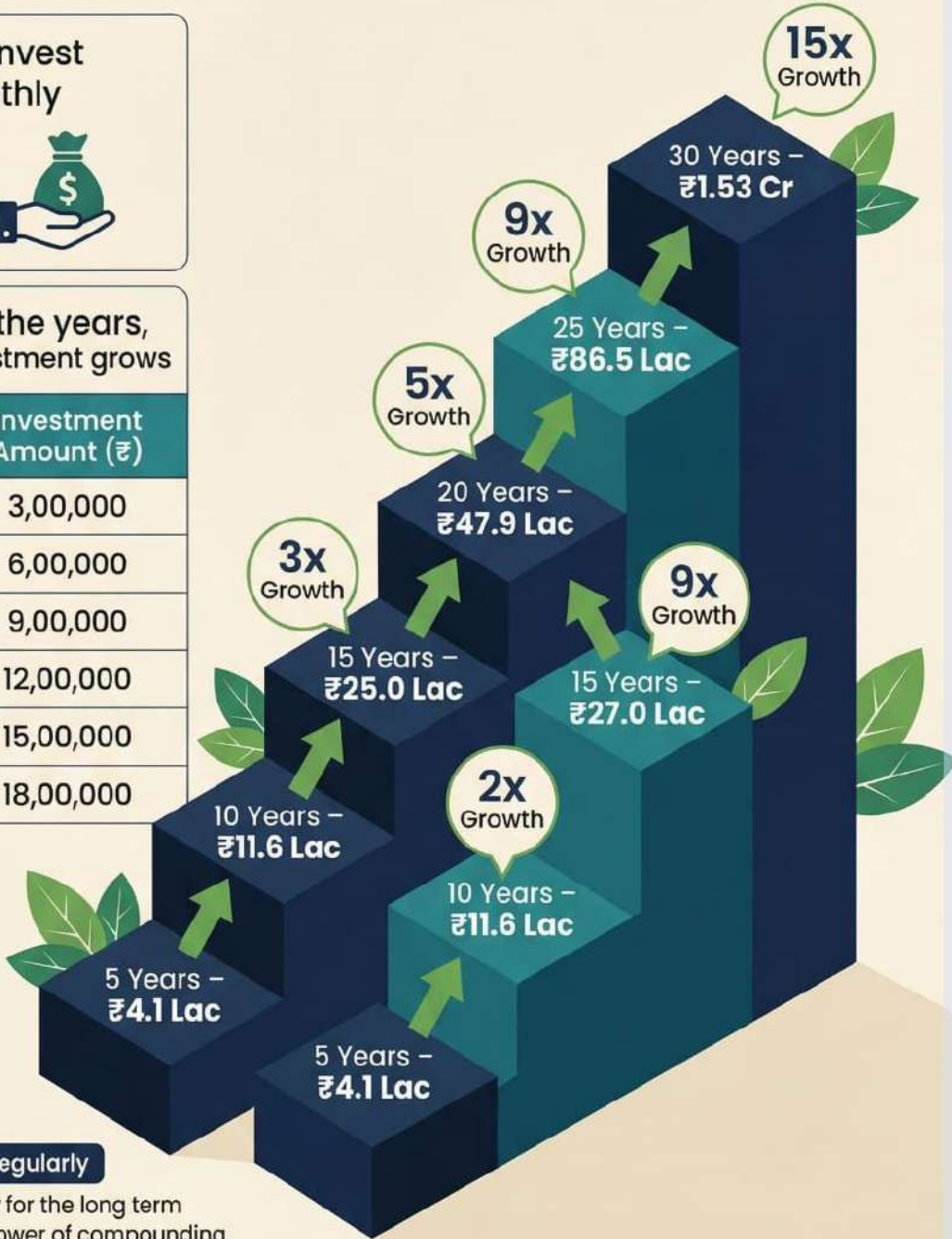
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